FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

Daily Report

Supplement

East Asia

Japan

POLITICAL LEADERS, CHANGES

FBIS-EAS-90-131-S
Monday
9 July 1990

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FBIS-EAS-90-131-S 9 July 1990

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* Direction of Political Reform Discussed

902B0113A Tokyo SANKEI SHIMBUN in Japanese 12-14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24-26 Apr 90—FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Article by SANKEI political reporters, Nobuo Sekida and Yasunori Matsuno: "How Will We Advance Political Reform: Inspection of the Election System"]

[12 Apr 90 p 1]

[Text] **Part 1: From Constituency and Cash to Policy**

The Election System Council (chairman: Yosoji Kobayashi), which is studying drastic reform of the election system and the system of political funding, received the first and second chairman's reports at a general meeting on the 10th, and set to work on drawing up a report which is scheduled toward the end of this month. In regard to the Lower House election system, which is the focal point, it advocates introducing a dual system which includes system of small election districts and a system of proportional representation; in regard to the political funding system, it advocates limiting contribution of funds from companies and organizations to those which are given to political parties, and so on. Why is this kind of bold political reform necessary now? We would like to ponder the meaning of current political reform centered on debate in the Election System Council.

The most important theme of the current Eighth Election System Council is to realize a political system that does not cost money and elections that are based on policy. The reason is that the relationship between money and politics was brought very much to the fore in the Recruit scandal, the last "scandal" of the Showa era.

To the Kaifu administration, which was born in response to the successive collapses of the Takeshita and Uno administrations, political reform was a suitable political theme. Because, not only had Prime Minister Kaifu professed himself to be a "political disciple" of former prime minister Miki, who, occasioned by the Lockheed scandal, had once resolutely carried out such political reforms as revision of the Political Funding Control Act, but also because for the time being it provided "evidence of legitimacy" to a prime minister who had "unexpectedly" (a source close to the prime minister) found himself in the seat of government without having any clear policy task.

The prime minister readily responded to the argument which existed within the Election System Council of urgent correction of the number of seats in the Lower House, and for a time incurred the ill will of the Liberal Democratic Party executive, which said "it is an excess display of high spirits." But, later, at an LDP [Liberal Democratic Party] national training conference, Secretary General Ozawa showed a posture of backing up Kaifu completely, saying "we must operate with so much resolve that we, ourselves, will shed blood and abandon the cabinet," so the will of the government and the ruling party was unified for the time being.

Certainly political funds become necessary in routine political activities. Even in a survey by the "Utopia Study Group," a policy research group made up mainly of young LDP Diet members, a result emerged that it costs Y100 million per person each year.

The "Council of Informed People on Political Reform" (chairman: the late Shuzo Hayashi, former director general of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau), which was innaugurated in 1989 at the request of (then) Prime Minister Takeshita in response to the Recruit scandal, also stressed that "it is to be expected that the current kind of political corruption would not have occurred had only the general principles of political ethics which the two houses of the Diet, themselves, decided on in 1985 been observed," and proposed, as a medium to long-term task, to reform from their foundation the proper nature of the very political activities and election campaigns which require vast political funding.

Why does politics cost money? Under the current system of medium election districts it is necessary for a political party that seeks to gain political power by obtaining a majority to run multiple candidates in the same district. The actual situation is that candidates compete in contributions and service to the locality, relying on "constituency, posters and cash."

In the First Committee (chairman: Tatae Horie, head of the Faculty of Law, Keio University), which takes reform of the election system as its central theme, views which point out such evils concerning the medium election district, as "it produces elections that cost money," and "it preserves party factions," appeared in succession from the very beginning, so the direction of introducing small election districts with single seats was powerful.

The dual system which will form the pillar of the next report is a mechanism which will guarantee a certain number of seats by a system of proportional representation in a compensatory manner to political parties which rank third and below, because the small election district system will be advantageous to such major political parties as the LDP and the JSP [Japan Socialist Party].

However, the opposition party side is unanimously opposing the direction of introducing the small election district system, and boycotted the hearings which the Election System Council held twice, in November 1989 and March 1990, giving "correction of the number of seats per district under the current medium election district system was decided on in advance" as the reason.

There is an aspect in which it is understandable that the Komeito, the Japan Communist Party and the Japan Democratic Socialist Party would all oppose introduction of a small election district system, but the JSP's reason for clinging to the medium election district system is less clear. A positive posture cannot be seen in Rengo Chairman Akira Yamagishi, either, in spite of the fact that he says he advocates attainment of a two party system based on introduction of a small election district system. It appears that, beside the fact that "it would not

do to stimulate the Komeito and the Japan Democratic Socialist Party when you are aiming at a change of government based on a coalition of opposition parties" (JSP executive), there also exists the worry that, as the primary opposition party, it would be necessary for the JSP to field a candidate in every small election district, so it could very easily put pressure on party finances.

There is no doubt that now we change the parliamentary system which will have its 100th anniversary in the autumn of this year will be an important step in determining what kind of politics we will choose heading into the 21st century.

[13 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 2: Smoldering Dissatisfaction With the Dual System**

The big pillar of election-system reform by the Eighth Election System Council (chairman: Yosoji Kobayashi) is introduction of a dual system of small election districts and proportional representation for Lower House elections.

The direction of introduction of a new system based on a combination of a system of small election districts and a proportional representation system was indicated by the second meeting of the First Committee (chairman: Tatae Horie), on 28 September 1989. Up to that point, abstract statements like "the small election district system is a system of majority representation, the large election district system is a system of proportional representation, and the medium election district system is something like a blend of these, so the evaluation for each is different," continued and scattered debates were being held on such things as correction of the number of seats in the Lower House, criticism of the current medium election district system and the pros and cons of each type of election system. Because of this, Chairman Kobayashi expressed a negative attitude toward employment of a system of proportional representation, which could easily invite a situation of separation into small parties, saying "it is also important to reflect the views of the people in a fair manner, but politics has no meaning whatsoever if a settlement cannot be reached." Furthermore, he strongly requested that a concrete plan for reform be studied centered on a system which combines a small election district system and a system of proportional representation.

With this as the start, the question of how to combine the two systems became the center of subsequent debate. Which to adopt: a dual system of the same kind as current Upper House elections, in which those elected by small election districts and by proportional representation are decided separately, or a West-German type combined system, in which winners in small election districts are assigned after seats in parliament have been apportioned based on votes received in proportional representation? There was fierce debate almost every time, involving whether it would be "sensitive reflection of the will of the people" by a dual system, or "accurate reflection of the will of the people" by a combined system. In contrast to proponents of the dual system adopting a view which attaches importance to small election districts, backers of the combined system took as its base the votes received by a system of proportional representation, and efforts to reach a consensus seesawed repeatedly.

But in the end, most of the committee held the opinion that "it would be meaningless to put together a report in which both arguments are presented in parallel," so at the 15th meeting, on 3 April, it was decided to "elect" the dual system by the slim margin of "a ratio of six to four" (Chairman Horie). The committee members who support the combined system also compromised, saying "if the majority is agreed."

In regard to this, opposition parties, which are criticizing the introduction of a system of small election districts, which is advantageous to large political parties, as "a party strategy for the advantage of the LDP," called the Election System Council to task for "there having existed a plan for a small election district system at the beginning," boycotted the council's hearings, and are turning their backs on reform of the election system itself, calling only for correction of the number of seats in the Lower House.

On the 11th, the day following the chairman's report, uneasiness concerning reform of the system was also expressed in succession from the government and the LDP, mostly by new Diet members, at a liaison meeting of the government and ruling party, and at general meetings of the Watanabe and Komoto factions.

However, they did not have any clear counterproposal on what to do in that case. A member of the council stressed that "people are still reflecting on the Recruit scandal, so reform of the election system is only possible now, when we are coming to the demarcation point of the 100th anniversary of the parliamentary system."

Table 1: Changes in The Election-District System and The Number of Seats for The Lower House

Year	Election-District System	Number of Seats	Number of Election Districts
1889	Small district system	300	1-seat districts—214; 2-seat districts—43; Total—257
1900	Large district system	369	1 to 13 seat districts—Total 97
1904	Large district system	381	1 to 12 seat districts—109
1919	Small district system	464	1-seat districts—295; 2-seat districts—68; 3-seat districts—374
1925	Medium district system	466	3-seat districts—53; 4-seat districts—38; 5-seat districts—31; Total—122

Table 1: Changes in The Election-District System and The Number of Seats for The Lower House (Continued)

Year	Election-District System	Number of Seats	Number of Election Districts
1945	Large district system	468	2 to 14 seat districts—Total—54
1947	Medium district system	466	3-seat districts—40; 4-seat districts—39; 5-seat districts—38; Total—117
1953	Medium district system	467	Increase of one 1-seat district; Total—118
1964	Medium district system	486	1-seat districts—1; 3-seat districts—43; 4-seat districts—39; 5-seat districts—40; Total—123
1970	Medium district system	491	Increase of one 5-seat district; Total—124
1975	Medium district system	511	1-seat districts—1; 3-seat districts—47; 4-seat districts—41; 5-seat districts—41; Total—130
1986	Medium district system	512	1-seat districts—1; 2-seat districts—4; 3-seat districts—42; 4-seat districts—39; 5-seat districts—43; 6-seat districts—1; Total—130

[14 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 3: The Difference in One Vote Becomes Less Than Two-fold**

A drastic reform of the election system is not being sought solely in order to attain policy-centered elections. It is also for the purpose of making a reality of the Diet resolution concerning the 1986 correction of the number of Diet seats which the opposition party side is advocating.

The number of seats for the Lower House has not been corrected since May 1986, when there was carried out the emergency correction of "add eight, subtract seven," which increased by eight the number of Diet seats in elections districts in which "the weight of one vote was light," and decreased by seven the number of Diet seats in elections districts in which it was "too heavy." This correction was based on a Supreme Court decision which held as "constitutional" that the maximum value of the differential in the number of voters per Diet member, the so-called "one-vote differential," not exceed three fold; and at the same time the Diet resolved unanimously to "promptly study a drastic revision after publication of the confirmed population of the 1985 census survey."

The result of the correction was that the general election (election of the Upper and Lower Houses on the same day) of July 1986 was conducted with a maximum differential of 2.99 fold, but the concentration of population in urban areas also continued after that, so the difference based on the numbers of voters on the election rolls was 3.08 fold as of September 1988, and had expanded to 3.15 times as of September 1989. It keeps on increasing; even in the population of the basic residents' ledger, what had been 3.13 fold at the end of March 1988 became 3.18 fold at the end of March 1989, and so on.

At the Election System Council, too, the opinion that "we should make an urgent proposal" concerning correction of the number of Diet members burst forth at the second general meeting on 28 July of last year. Prime Minister Kaifu, who attended the second general meeting, which was held on 18 September, also showed a desire for correction, saying "I think we should grapple with it so that the next general election will not be held in a state with violates the constitution," and on the following day, the 19th, he directed (then) minister for home affairs Watanabe and (then) LDP Policy Research Council director Mitsuka to study the matter.

However, the LDP takes "attempting to reduce the number of Diet seats within a drastic reform of the election system" its basic policy, so it reacted against the prime minister's statement, which had ignored this. At a cabinet meeting on 26 September the prime minister abandoned the idea of an emergency correction, stating "we should look at the result of the 1990 census (in regard to correction)."

The LDP's (then) deputy director of the Headquarters to Promote Political Reform, Gotoda, who testified at an Election System Council hearing on 28 October, pointed out that changes would be required in the boundary lines of over one-half of the 130 election districts if they were to try to correct the number of Diet members while it was a medium election district system. He explained that "In actuality, it is impossible to reduce the number of Diet members and correct the differential without making a searching inquiry into the basis of the election system."

Accepting this, in the Council, too, the debate shifted to "what can the Council actually do," and the question of how much of a differential to accept became the focal point.

The deliberations of the First Committee (chairman: Tatae Horie) on the proper nature of the number of seats in the Lower House proceeded smoothly, and all sorts of opinions emerged, such as "we will eliminate the differential between election districts," "we will make it within 1.5 fold," and "we will make the differential between prefectures within 2 fold," and while following the Supreme Court decision to keep the maximum differential between election districts at within 3 fold, they gave consideration to such things as not dividing city, ward, town or village districts when partitioning the districts.

It was settled at the commonsense line of "making it the basic principle to keep it below two to one (2 fold)."

Number of Voters Per Member of the Lower House

Election districts where one vote is light			Heavy election districts	
Election district	Number of voters per Diet member	Comparison with the Miyazaki Second District	Election district	Number of voters per Diet member
(1) Kanagawa Fourth District	333,550	3.15	(1)Miyazaki Second District	105,884
(2)Chiba Fourth District	323,076	3.05	(2)Miyagi Second District	105,965
(3)Saitama First District	304,270	2.87	(3)Amami Islands District	106,603
(4)Saitama Fifth District	301,924	2.85	(4)Nagano Third District	106,621
(5)Tokyo Seventh District	299,544	2.83	(5)Mie Second District	107,846
(6)Hiroshima First District	294,631	2.78	(6)Oita Second district	107,966
(7)Kanagawa Third District	294,233	2.78	(7)Kumamoto Second District	109,804
(8)Osaka Fifth District	294,109	2.78	(8)Iwate Second District	110,290
(9)Saitama Second District	287,882	2.72	(9)Fukushima Second District	110,320
(10)Tokyo Eleventh District	287,259	2.71	(10)Wakayama Second District	110,565

[17 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 4: Difficulty in Partitioning of Districts**

The biggest reason why Diet members of both the ruling and opposition parties are expressing opposition to and disquiet at drastic reform of the election system by introduction of a dual system of small election districts and proportional representation, is because the division of election districts will be greatly altered.

As contained in the chairman's report, if the total number of Diet seats is 500, and the proportion of small election-district Diet seats is 60 percent, the number of Diet members elected from small districts will be 300. The number of registered voters on the rolls as of 2 September 1989 was 90,037,448, so it works out that there are 300,125 voters for each Diet member. In other words, it means that they will make areas which have about 300,000 voters into new election districts. It means that in terms of calculation, 30 election districts will be formed in Tokyo, where voters are most numerous, and conversely, two election districts will be formed in Tottori Prefecture and so on, where there are few voters.

When one attaches all sorts of conditions to this, such as (1) making the differential between election districts less than double, (2) not dividing the areas of cities, wards, towns or villages, (3) not dividing counties, either, in so far as possible and (4) not making discontinuous districts, pieces of which are surrounded by other districts, dividing up the districts becomes quite difficult technically. The possibility of establishing two-seat districts as "an extreme exception," was left in the report because consideration was given to this kind of situation. But the view that "the premise is that introduction of the small election district will avoid conflict within the same political party, so incorporating a two-seat district, even as an exception, will have a problem," is deeply rooted in the Election System Council, so at a meeting of the Drafting Committee (chairman: Assistant Council Chairman, Tsutomu Sato) on the 12th it was arranged not to include it in the report.

Of course, the difficulty in dividing the districts is not this kind of technical problem alone. As a larger problem there exists the problem that if a division of districts is carried out based on the new system, the election bases which incumbent Diet members and candidates have cultivated up to now will end up being destroyed completely.

A Young LDP Diet member pointed out that depending on the manner of the division, incumbents of the same party would compete with each other, and interfactional conflict over coordination of official recognition of candidates would become fiercer than it has been up to now, saying "technical problems are 10 percent, the remaining 90 percent is the problem of political interests."

The close relationship between politician and locality which is said to be "constituency, posters and cash," will also be completely useless if the election district ends up becoming different. The supporters' organizations, which are "vote gathering machines," will also be broken up, so it will be necessary to reorganize them. Therefore, to those who are trying to continue activites as politicians in the future as well, division of election districts is an important problem which will affect directly whether they are elected or defeated.

Because of this, the council is negative toward embarking on a set division. In the report, too, concerning correction of the imbalance, which is future alteration of the division, it has incorporated the idea that "we will establish an impartial agency for the purpose of drawing up the original plan, and will review it every 10 years," but in regard to the first division which will accompany introduction of the new system, it has not been specified who will carry it out according to what kind of procedure. At a general meeting on the 10th of this month the opinion "it is necessary, is it not, to incorporate the detailed division in the report," came

from members, but Chairman Kobayashi pointed out that it would be too late to get it into the report, saying "even if we must do it (in order to make it into a bill) it is impossible to do it this month," and decided to continue deliberations in the Drafting Committee.

[18 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 5: Organization Contributions: A Loophole in Centralization of Political Parties**

The composition of politics and money, and the opaqueness of political funding was brought into relief by the "Recruit scandal," which came to light in the summer of 1988.

It is a scandal in which an employment referral company, "Recruit," is considered to have transferred stock which had not been offered to the public, made political contributions and purchased tickets to political fund raisers amounting to Y1 billion to over 40 Diet members of the ruling party and opposition parties; in regard to politicians, two defendents: Takao Fujinami, former chief cabinet secretary, and Katsuya Ikeda, former deputy secretary general of the Komeito, are currently on trial.

Of these, the defendent Fujinami is under suspicion of having accepted political contributions amounting to Y60 million from Recruit over a 5-year period, and of having diverted part of that to the purchase of his home in Tokyo's Suginami Ward, and in March of this year the national tax authorities pointed out that Fujinami had failed to report over Y94 million, and levied on him an additional tax of approximately Y60 million (rehabilitation decision).

The defense side denies this, and it does not come to light even if one investigates the defendent's reports of political income and expenditure. In principle no tax is levied on political contributions, so it is natural that the national public views opaque political contributions with a suspicious eye.

The total amount of income from political funding in 1988 for the central portion and the local portion combined was Y307.8 billion. It was the second highest amount in history, after 1986, when Upper and Lower House elections were held on the same day. Within this, income from fund-raisers reached Y10.214 billion.

While the Second Committee (chairman: Yoshikatsu Kono) of the Election System Council recognizes the significance of political funding as "a means of political participation" and "the financial base of political activity," and says "by nature the independence and autonomy of the interested party should be respected as much as possible," it points out strongly the necessity of restoring the people's trust by opening the "expenditure and inflow" of political funding to public view.

The most important focal point was the handling of organization contributions, including contributions from companies, which were brought to the fore in the Recruit scandal. "Prohibition" was incorporated in the report of the first council in December 1961, and the report of the second council in October 1963 also follows this. Later, in response to an increase in the proportion of political contributions accounted for by organization contributions, the report of the fifth council in 1967 said "the current situation of political funding is that much of it depends on the funds of companies, labor unions and other organizations, so it is difficult to limit it to individual contributions immediately at this time," and it was proposed that it be switched to individual contributions with a target date of 5 years later.

In debate in the current council, the defensive argument of "corporations, too, are constituent members of society, so it is natural for them to make contributions as political action," and the practical argument of "politics could not go on if there were no company donations" came out in a deeply rooted manner in regard to political contributions of organizations.

The result was that it proposed to permit organization contributions, and to centralize the point of contact for receiving the contributions in the political parties from the viewpoint that "fund raising by individual politicians will cease to be all that necessary if political activity and elections become centered on political parties because of reform of the election system."

It is a judgment which places importance on reality, but among Diet members of both the ruling and opposition parties there is open mention of the "loophole" that "all you have to do is have them contribute the money in the name of an individual," so voices are raised which question its efficacy.

[20 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 6: Political Fund-Raising Organizations: An Oversight Function Is Lacking**

What became a focal point of reform of the system of political funding, along with the propriety of contributions by organizations, was regulation of political organizations.

This is because it became clear that in the Recruit scandal most of the political contributions were broken up into small lots by a multiple number of political organizations so that they would not fall under the Political Funding Control Act's overall ceiling regulation (a contribution to an individual politician of Y20 million for an individual and Y7.5 million to Y100 million for an organization), distributive regulation (up to Y1.5 million to the same person) or standard for making it public (over Y1 million), and because the actual situation of political organizations having become hotbeds of "illegal contributions," was clear.

The contribution of Y5 million from Recruit to Minister for Posts and Telecommunications Fukaya, which was revealed at a meeting of the Upper House Committee on

the Budget on the 4th of this month, also failed to surface in reports of income and outlay of political funds because it was made by the method of Y1 million to an organization in 1985 and Y1 million each to four organizations in 1986.

The Second Committee of the Election System Council (chairman: Yoshikatsu Kono) caught for each politician this kind of contribution which is broken up into small lots, and the necessity of registers which make clear the relationship between political organizations and politicians for the purpose of guaranteeing the efficacy of the Political Funding Control Act was pointed out early on.

The limiting of political organizations to one per politician, and the introduction of an "establishment agreement system" which would require a politician's agreement in establishing a political organization were proposed, but there was also the view that it would infringe upon the constitutions's "freedom of association," so it was very difficult for a good plan to emerge.

Thereupon, what the Political Contribution Control Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the secretariate, thought up was not to regulate political organizations, but to establish new "political fund-raising organizations" for the center and the provinces, and make them the points of contact for politicians' acceptance of contributions. This plan was accepted by the vast majority of members, who had been wracking their brains to create a concrete plan, so it was arranged to incorporate it into the chairman's report as it stood, along with clarifying the relationship between political organizations and politicians, and centralizing the reporting of income and expenditure.

The report set the standard of public reporting for fund raising organizations at anything above Y1 million per year, and set forth the lowering of the amount for other political organizations from the current more than Y1 million to more than Y10,000. It is a measure to prevent political organizations other than fund-raising organizations from providing cover for fund-raising as has happened up to now.

But this reform-plan, too, has many such loopholes as contribution in the names of individuals. In regard to the biggest reason why its efficacy cannot be guaranteed, voices in the Council pointed out repeatedly that the Ministry of Home Affairs, which handles the reports of income and expenditure, has no oversight function. A plan to establish a "Political Funding Screening Committee" as an independent agency possessing practical investigatory powers in the manner of America's Federal Election Commission, and a plan to allow the reports of income and expenditure to be handled by an impartial party like a certified public accountant, emerged, but the negative view that "there is danger of becoming interference with political activity and infringment of freedom of political activity," was also deeply rooted, so in regard to establishment of the agency the report only included the expression "further study will be done."

[21 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 7: Official Promotion of Political Activities: The Debate on a Political Party Act Was Incomplete**

The Election System Council (chairman: Yosoji Kobayashi) considered promotion of political activity at public expense a precondition of regulation of political funding. It is the view "let us bear the burden of the cost of rightful political activities by official subsidies in exchange for controlling political funding strictly."

What was taken to be a problem in considering official subsidies was the public's sense concerning the cost of politics. In the Second Committee (chairman: Yoshikatsu Kono) a view emerged that official subsidies are proper, "elections are events where the people of the nation delegate rights to Diet members, so voters should bear the burden of the necessary funds," but on the other hand, a view was also brought forth which was negative toward official subsidies, holding that "there is no tax on political funding, so one should be cognizant that even in the current situation one-half is being financed by public funds."

Prime Minister Kaifu, who attended the seventh general meeting of the council on 14 March, indicated in regard to public subsidies that obtaining the people's consent was the first consideration, stating "There is a question of whether the people of the nation will consent concerning what amount is proper to be spent on political activities. We cannot very well say on the spot that the public will bear the expenses."

In response to this, there emerged in the Second Committee such concrete theses as "we should consider it centered on expansion of the bearing of election expenses by the national treasury," "we should give primary consideration to assisting such Diet member activities as the cost of clerical work on legislation and salaries for secretaries," and "it is necessary to create a special agency and decide on an appropriate amount for subsidies." But opposition between the argument "giving official subsidies will be limited to the case in which regulations have been implemented on other funding," which gives priority to regulation, and the argument "it is better to first give official subsidies and to regulate political funding by abolishing organization contributions and so on at the stage when party-centered political activities and elections have matured," which gives priority to subsidies, continued to the very end. The chairman's report mentioned that two arguments pro and con had emerged, and said only that "when one considers the situation in a comprehensive manner, it is appropriate to engage in giving official subsidies to political parties."

Because of this, the debate concerning a law on political party which would provide legal support for official subsidies was not completed either. The recognition that "if we give subsidies to political parties, it will be necessary to make it clear to the people in the form of law," was incorporated in the report, but it was arranged

to continue study concerning such concrete content of the law as the important matter of the political parties that would be subsidized, the total amount of the public subsidies and the criteria for apportionment, and at a meeting of the Drafting Committee on the 12th of this month such observations as "the content lacks concreteness" were made again and again.

The content of the public subsidies and the pros and cons of a political party law will be left to later deliberation, but in contrast to the fact that the LDP strongly advocates establishment of the political party law, saying "it is inseparable from reform of the election system," the opposition party side opposes it from the exactly opposite side, saying such things as "free political activity will be interfered with."

[24 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 8: To Probe the Ineffective System Which Holds a Candidate Jointly Responsible**

A veteran Liberal Democratic Party Diet member who was elected in the general election of February of this year was questioned by the police as a witness.

It was because his wife (71) and eldest son (48) had been arrested on suspicion of having offered bribes totaling Y5 million to affiliated city councilmen in mid-December 1989 before the election; it was impossible to prove that the Diet member, himself, participated in the act of bribery, so only his wife was formally charged with violation of the Public Office Election Act (attempted bribery and preelection campaigning).

A leader of the same faction as this Diet member says under his breath "It was too classic a method. If only they had done it more skillfully...."

According to a National Police Agency survey, 11,176 people were arrested in 5,114 election violations in the simultaneous Upper and Lower House elections of 1986. But there is no example of invalidation of an election victory by application of the system established in the Public Office Election Act which holds a candidate jointly responsible. This is because trials take time, and the kind of guilty verdicts in which joint responsibility would be applied were not forthcoming before the next election was held.

In trials for election violations, depending on the incident, a "100 day trial" system is applied, in which it is arranged that a verdict be handed down within 100 days from the day on which the court takes cognizance of the case. But even if this is applied, the average number of days it took until a verdict between 1983 and 1987 was 88 days for the first trial, 274 days for a hearing on an appeal and 72 days for a hearing on a final appeal. For election trials as a whole, just the first trial has taken as long as 336 days on average. The trial to of the Diet member, himself, to invalidate his election victory is held after the criminal trial of a violator who would come under the joint responsibility system has ended and the verdict has been established, so it is a situation in which "it is far too late to fall within the term of office of the election concerned." (Ministry of Home Affairs executive).

This matter also became a big issue in the Election System Council's Second Committee (chairman: Yoshikatsu Kono), and such things were proposed as changing the three-trial system into a two-trial system, establishing a department in the high court which would specialize in handling election trials, and dealing with the invalidation of election victories separately from the criminal trials, but since it is a matter which involves the foundation of the trial system the chairman's report did not go beyond saying "opinions existed."

(1) Broadening of the scope of application and (2) strengthening of the system were debated in the discussion on strengthening the system of joint responsibility, which was conducted in tandem with the reconsideration of the trial system. In broadening the scope of application, they decided to add secretaries to the overall campaign manager, regional campaign managers, spouse, relatives and treasurer who have come under the system up to now.

Some members pointed out the possibility of the occurrence of "decoy" incidents in which campaign workers for the opposing camp become allies and entrap candidates if the scope of application were expanded, but there was also the fact that in the Recruit scandal the excuse of "the secretary did it," was used again and again, so the majority were of the opinion that "secretaries and politicians should be viewed as one and the same."

Furthermore, in regard to strengthening of sanctions, taking England's Corrupt Practices Prevention Act as a reference, the direction firmed up of incorporating a restriction on standing as a candidate in the next election. At present the Drafting Committee is studying such concrete methods as the term of the restriction, and the outlook is for it to be 5 years, taking the median between the 6-year term of office for the Upper House and the 4-year term for the Lower House.

[25 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 9: Drastic Plan Risking Continuation of Upper House Sought**

The "Election System Council" (chairman: Yosoji Kobayashi) will submit a report on reform of the election system and the political funding system to Prime Minister Kaifu on the 26th, but even after the report, there will still be many problems which it will be required to study for a secondary report.

A representative case is reform of the system for Upper House elections. Study was begun in the First Committee (chairman: Tadae Horie) saying "it must be considered in conjunction with reform of the system for

Lower House elections," but the debate became complicated because it became entangled with reform of the Lower House election system, so it was arranged to set to work on it after first finishing the plan for reform of the Lower House election system.

In the deliberations of the council members, it was pointed out that even in the Upper House, which is in a situation in which the position of ruling and opposition parties is reversed, the method of managing the proceedings is centered on the government party, and is virtually the same as that in the Lower House, and there was repeated criticism to the effect that "it has become impossible for the natural role of "the representative body of good sense" and "the checking function of the Upper House" to be fulfilled.

In response to this, there was a succession of such opinions as "it is better for the methods by which the Upper House and Lower House systems reflect the will of the people to differ" and "we should ease the party platform restraint on individual policies," and such concrete plans were proposed as (1) abolishing the system of proportional representation and making it an election solely of election districts, (2) reviving the former "national election district" in place of the system of proportional representation and (3) making the system of proportional representation into block units, but the result was that time ran out, and it was written in the chairman's report that "we will study it as soon as possible after this."

It is arranged that a penetrating exchange of opinions concerning such concrete plans will be carried out after the current report, and judging from the fact that the argument of the uselessness of the Upper House, that "unless reform is carried out the Upper House will cease to be necessary" is deeply rooted among the people, it can probably be said that the drawing up of a drastic plan that risks the continued existence of the Upper House is demanded.

Another big task that has been left is the proper nature of the election campaigns, themselves, which will accompany introduction of a dual system of small election districts and proportional representation for the Lower House election. In the council the recognition is dominant that "the current system has more regulations than Europe and America, and for that reason is in a state in which, conversely, we cannot attend to controlling it," so the view of "making election campaigns free in principle, and making more strict the control of such pernicious violations as entertaining voters and bribery" has become stronger.

What has come up as a concrete policy to date is the prohibition of "door to door canvasing." It was pointed out by the members concerning the door-to-door visiting of voters' homes by candidates or their campaign workers, that "actually it is done in the name of canvassing for subscriptions for such things as party newspapers," and the majority held the view that it should be permitted after having attached such specific conditions as a time limitation.

There are many problems beside this which have been left without a clear conclusion having emerged, the most important of which are division of small election districts and establishment of a law on political parties. Among them are also many tasks for study which will stir up big debates between the ruling and opposition parties in order to attain them.

Therefore, the question of when the second report will be submitted is attracting attention, and the government and the LDP, which are making a public pledge to make the shape of the entire reform clear to the people by the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Diet in November of this year, are giving consideration to the time it takes to be made into a bill, so they hope to receive the second report by early autumn of this year at the latest. How deeply will a council which has reopened deliberations after successive recesses be able to debate things by that time? We are coming to the final situation, in which the meaning of the council's being established after a hiatus of 17 years will be questioned.

[26 Apr 90 p 3]

[Text] **Part 10: An Urgent Task in Order to Dispel the People's Distrust**

"The attitude of the Election System Council is 'in the beginning was the small election district.'" (Shigeru Ito, chairman of the JSP Policy Council); "we should first implement the Diet resolutions on correcting the number of Diet seats under the current system of medium election districts and strengthen the regulation of political funding." (Tatsuo Kawabata: chairman of the Japan Democratic Socialist Party's Special Committee on Political Reform Policy).

The opposition party side, such as the JSP, is showing fierce opposition to the Election System Council chairman's report, which makes its pillar such things as introduction of a dual system of small election districts and proportional representation in the Lower House, regulation of political funding, and strengthening of the system of joint responsibility of political candidates for election violations committed by their campaign staff. It has also firmly rejected repeated requests from the Election System Council to attend hearings of opinions from political parties.

The reasons for the opposition are such things as (1) introduction of the kind of small election district system that would focus political circles into two large political parties, with the stated reason of attempting an alternation of governments, at a time when the needs of the people are becoming more diverse, would narrow the range of choice for the people of the nation, and such parties as the Komeito, the Japan Communist Party and

the Japan Democratic Socialist Party can only do battle by a proportional representation of two fifths. (2) if one uses such things as the rate of obtaining votes in the current medium district system as a reference, the small district system would benefit only the LDP, so such things as a change in government would become more and more difficult and (3) with the small district system there is a stronger possibility of elections becoming expensive.

However, according to a survey of all Diet members, including those of the opposition parties, which was conducted last month by the (Nationai Congress on Society and the Economy, which is composed of persons of learning and experience and the like, 86.9 percent recognized the necessity for drastic reform of the medium election district system.

Therefore, in the JSP, Chairperson Doi and other executives indicated the intention to study a system of joint use of a medium district system and a system of proportional representation, and Vice Chairman Makoto Tanabe advocates his own plan for introduction of large election district proportional representation and establishment of a political parties law. In the Komeito, Policy Board Deputy Chairman Akinori Yamamine advocates "proportional representation for the Lower House, which is a place for party politics, and voting for individuals by name for the Upper House, which is a representative body for sound judgment."

The Japan Democratic Socialist Party is in the process of studying in its Election System Research Committee such plans for reform as (1) a 470 seat Lower House and a two-vote system of joint use of small election districts and proportional representation (the number of small districts would be 235); (2) small election district candidates also being registered on the roster of proportional representation candidates (unrestricted), and those elected winning unconditionally by proportional representation, and establishing the ranking of the remainder and registering them on the roster (restricted); (3) proportional representation allotted by the d'Hondt system based on the votes obtained by each party; and (4) establishment of a political parties law which emphasizes subsidizing of political party finances.

In addition, each opposition party is publishing its respective plan for revising the law regulating political funding, and is also studying the turning of the bill on political ethics into legislation. But the coordination of opinion within a party and among parties has not progressed to details on any of these, so they are not at a stage at which they can be made into counterproposals to the report of the Election System Council.

Meanwhile, a small election district system is not set forth clearly in the General Principles of Reform of Party Politics which the LDP compiled in order to correct its own political posture because of reflection on the Recruit scandal and so on. However, LDP Political Reform Headquarters Deputy Director Gotoda, who compiled the General Principles as the party's consensus, evaluates it by saying "the reason I did not make a small election district system definite is because debate was proceeding in the Election System Council; our view agrees for the most part with the content of the committee chairmen's reports." But, as has also been mentioned in this series of articles, dissatisfactions and doubts concerning the committee chairmen's reports have been bursting out in succession even within the LDP.

Prime Minister Kaifu said that he would strive for political reform with "indomitable resolve," and at a meeting with Secretary General Ozawa on the 23d he confirmed that "we will unite and grapple with it immediately." A government source says "we want to turn the Election System Council's report into a bill by the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Diet in early autumn, and make it a government proposal in the next ordinary session of the Diet."

The Election System Council intends to publish its conclusions concerning such things as division of small election districts, a political parties law and reform of the Upper House, which it will leave as tasks in this time's report, in a secondary by autumn, when the full-fledged controversy over political reform will begin in the Diet.

All the more so because it is a drastic reconsideration of the election system that "will influence the political life of Diet members" (an LDP executive), it is fully expected that fierce opposition will emerge from both ruling and opposition parties when division of small election districts and so on become more concrete. But now, when the political distrust of the people has been about to reach a "saturated state" since the Recruit scandal, it can be said that political reform is an urgent task of the highest priority. The Election System Council's report to Prime Minister Kaifu will be made on the 26th.

* Series Looks at Current State of LDP Factions

902B0116A Tokyo SANKEI SHIMBUN in Japanese 1-5 May 90—FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[1 May 90 p 2]

[First article in series: "The Takeshita Faction—Discord Over Strategy To Regain Power"]

[Text] During this holiday, Prime Minister Kaifu is touring Southwest Asia, and also making preparations to weather a storm centered on the battle over the consumption tax in the second half of the Diet session. The prime minister is now enjoying a respite from the calls made at one time to "dump Kaifu," and seems to have gained confidence in the staying power of his government, but the leaders and men of influence of each faction of the Liberal-Democratic Party [LDP] are reshaping their strategies for taking power. What actions will be taken by each party faction?

The Takeshita Faction

A meeting aimed at the restoration of relations between the Takeshita and Abe factions was quietly held in Tokyo on the evening of 25 April. The attendees included Finance Minister Hashimoto and Construction Minister Watanuki from the Takeshita faction, and Transport Minister Ono and Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Minister Yamamoto from the Abe faction. The attendees are all cabinet members and therefore have temporarily seceded from their factions, so the appearance was of a social gathering of congenial colleagues, but in fact it was hastily set up after a proposal from members of the Abe faction who were worried about the reports of discord between former Prime Minister Takeshita and former [LDP] Secretary General Abe.

However, it is said that no direct mention of the vital Abe-Takeshita relationship was made by the attendees. According to one cabinet member who was present, "It is a touchy subject, so everyone avoided discussing it." That is how delicate the Abe-Takeshita relationship has become.

It is said that trouble arose in the Abe-Takeshita relationship when Mr. Abe revealed his displeasure because although while visiting the U.S. and Brazil in March Mr. Takeshita proposed making Abe a special government envoy, Takeshita sounded out Prime Minister Kaifu on the appointment instead of former Ambassador-to-the-U.S. Matsunaga. At the same time, there are those of the opinion that Takeshita's repeated aggressive speech and action, which can be taken as rekindling a desire to return to power, is aggravating the Abe-Takeshita relationship.

In fact, the movement to return Mr. Takeshita to center stage is quite active, even though Takeshita himself is indicating that he has no intention of returning to power. Takeshita held an hour's worth of talks with President Bush on the problems of the Japan-U.S. Structural Impediments Initiative [SII] talks, and in mid-April he met with Republic of Korea President No Tae-u and paved the way for a solution to the problem of third-generation Koreans living in Japan. Furthermore, he plans to resume local campaigning in mid-May to promote his plan for the revitalization of "hometowns" and local culture.

However, there are those who are strongly of the opinion that this strategy to return Takeshita to power has a negative effect not only on the Abe-Takeshita relationship, but also on Takeshita's relationship with his in-law Mr. Kanemaru. Kanemaru emphatically denied the possibility of Takeshita's reinstatement as prime minister in an interview in this newspaper, saying "We do not have such a shortage of people that the same person has to serve as prime minister two or three times." On the one hand, this suggests that he considers Abe to be the favored candidate to succeed Kaifu, and, on the other hand, it paints a picture of the Abe-Kanemaru relationship becoming closer as the Abe-Takeshita relationship cools.

In a lecture in Fukuoka City on 23 April, Mr. Kanemaru quickly expressed the view that the prime minister, whose first term expires in October of next year, will be able to continue in office; on the 29th Mr. Takeshita expressed a similar idea, strengthening their position in support of the Kaifu administration. Because solving the problem of the succession of leadership of the Takeshita faction "will take some time" (according to a leader of that faction,) for the time being both Takeshita and Kanemaru are resolved to cooperate with the Kaifu government in all respects. That is where the reality of a "government led by the Takeshita faction" lies; where the Takeshita faction can exercise the most influence, and conserve its strength.

However, concerning the relationship between Takeshita and Kanemaru, there are still those who hold the view that, in the words of a close associate, "there have been no real changes; the two men share the role of most influential political figure." Because LDP Secretary General Ozawa and Finance Minister Hashimoto are rapidly gaining strength, in addition to the Takeshita-Kanemaru relationship, the struggle for succession within the party is getting tangled; and it seems that future developments in the faction will be rather complicated.

[2 May 90 p 2]

[Second article in series: "The Abe Faction—Training New People and Cultivating Fighting Strength"]

[Text] **The Abe Faction**

At 6:30 on the evening of 24 April, the day after former Deputy Prime Minister Kanemaru, along with calling for the return of two of the Northern Islands [held by the USSR but claimed by Japan], said that he would approve of the continuation in office of Prime Minister Kaifu after his term expires next fall, three influential men gathered in a restaurant in Tokyo's Ichibancho. Two were from the Liberal Democratic Party [LDP]: former LDP Secretary General Abe, and Abe faction Secretary General Hiroshi Mitsuzuka. The third was a labor leader, Rengo [National Confederation of Trade Unions] Chairman Akira Yamagishi. The three spoke for two and a half hours; half an hour longer than planned.

"We discussed labor problems in the Soviet Union." "Shunpei Tsukahara of the Abe faction has become minister of labor, so I paid my respects." "It was a regular discussion. We spoke about all sorts of things."

The concrete substance of the conversation was not revealed to outsiders, but it is said that "The Kaifu administration and the consumption tax were discussed."

Mr. Yamagishi has said that "We need to have pipelines to many people in the political arena," and he frequently

has interchanges with influential figures in the ruling and opposition parties, but why was it necessary for Yamagishi to talk in private with Mr. Abe at this time?

At the time of the Takeshita government, Abe was called "the man closest to power," but his hospitalization due to illness while he was LDP Secretary General and the Recruit incident greatly upset his plans to take power.

Abe himself spoke philosophically, saying "During my hundred days in the hospital, I was able to take a calm look at politics. If the world needs me, my turn will come;" but in the campaign for February's general election he toured the entire country, enabling 21 new members of his faction to be elected.

On 25 April, House of Councillors member Tomoharu Tazawa joined the Abe faction. The faction now has 88 members in the two houses (not counting House of Councillors President Tsuchiya, who is temporarily disaffiliated from the faction;) it has strength, in the words of one faction leader, "on a scale unimaginable in the days when it was the Fukuda faction." Sources close to Abe have also said that "we expect to add two more members in the near future;" the faction is steadily preparing for the post-Kaifu political scene.

The entire faction is now wrestling with the task of training the 21 new members. Mr. Mitsuzuka and former faction Secretary General Yoshiro Mori are the key people involved in study groups and consultations for the new members, and are giving their undivided attention to building a strategy for the future.

Despite that, there are not clear prospects for an Abe government. Abe's relationship with his staunch friend Takeshita, who once said "I will make Abe prime minister," is not the honeymoon it once was. Partly in reaction to that, Abe is moving closer than before to Mr. Kanemaru, but Kanemaru himself is taking the position that he will approve of Kaifu's bid to remain in office, and the Abe faction's post-Kaifu strategy is approaching a major turning point.

Furthermore, because the next generation of politicians such as LDP Secretary General Ozawa and Finance Minister Hashimoto is gaining strength, and because of the uncertainty about the state of Abe's health, there are those within the faction who are saying "Hurry up and take power." It is said that former Prime Minister Fukuda is telling those around him that "The problem is time."

[3 May 90 p 2]

[Third article in the series: "The Watanabe Faction—Intra-Factional Harmony an Urgent Necessity"]

[Text] **The Watanabe Faction**

A short time after former Prime Minister Nakasone turned over control of his faction to former LDP Policy Research Committee Chairman Watanabe, a Diet member who had served as Nakasone's secretary paid a visit to the former prime minister.

"I would very much like to hear you speak about East-West relations at the faction's general meeting. My colleagues are all looking forward to it."

Nakasone responded at once. At events such as a congratulatory party for House of Representatives Speaker Sakurauchi, who had been sponsored by Nakasone, the former prime minister sent signals to Watanabe and to faction Secretary General Yamaguchi that he would like to speak at the general meeting. It had already been reported that former Prime Minister Takeshita, who had left his faction after resigning because of the Recruit incident, had made an appearance at a general meeting of his own faction. It would be only natural for Nakasone to think "I too underwent the baptism of the election." [i.e. was forgiven for his role in the Recruit scandal by being reelected, and should be allowed to participate in political affairs as before.]

However, Nakasone has still not actually attended a general meeting of the faction. Various reasons have been given, such as "conditions within the party do not allow it" (the words of one faction leader,) but it can also be taken as something caused by the tension between the old and new leaders.

A Diet member close to both Nakasone and Watanabe once characterized their relationship as the two men "staring at each other with swords drawn and pointed"; that tension apparently is still present.

The fact that the succession of factional leadership occurred in the midst of the "Recruit purge," described by a faction leader as "a sudden squall raging through the world of politics," is another reason why the air within the faction cannot be cleared. There is an emotional antagonism between the Diet members said to be direct descendents of Nakasone and the group of Watanabe's apprentices. In fact, there were even young men who angrily threatened to desert [the party] if Nakasone were to make a comeback this time.

Watanabe too is aware of the atmosphere within the faction, and since assuming the leadership he has devoted his efforts to intrafaction harmony with "impartiality" as his motto.

However, there is almost no one in the faction of the opinion that Watanabe could come to power under present conditions. In the recent general election the Watanabe faction dropped to fourth-largest in the House of Representatives. The faction's strategy for taking power is limited to the unpromising position that, in the words of a faction leader, "Now is the time to steadily build up our strength."

Faction Vice Chairman Kuranari urged faction unity and issued a call to action at the general meeting, saying "Chairman Watanabe is now presiding over our faction, and we are now aiming to take power. However it is not

enough simply to take power. What is important is a philosophy of what to do when we have power."

It is a fact that with the continuation of the Kaifu government, the road to power for Watanabe, who along with Abe and Miyazawa belongs to the older generation, becomes in the words of one faction leader "a race against time." Watanabe hopes to strengthen his political power with the visit he is making to China, but it seems there is still no prospect of his forming a government.

[4 May 90 p 2]

[Fourth article in series: "The Miyazawa Faction—Devoting all Efforts to Strengthening Unity"]

[Text] **The Miyazawa Faction**

Just before the current extended vacation, former Science and Technology Agency Director Yohei Kohno whispered to former Deputy Prime Minister Miyazawa, who had no vacation plans other than to rest at his villa in Karuizawa, that "There is no reason for you to travel abroad on some artificial pretext simply because others are going."

On top of former Prime Minister Takeshita's visits to the United States and the Republic of Korea, and former LDP Policy Research Committee Chairman Watanabe's visit to China, former LDP Secretary General Abe is considering visits to the United States and the USSR. At the same time the "foreign inclinations" of those who are called the party's new leaders are very conspicuous these days.

Since his visit to the United States last fall, Miyazawa, who is called an internationalist, has not displayed any interest in traveling abroad; some within his faction are complaining that this is not entirely satisfactory. That is the setting for discontent in the faction with a leader who is not showing his usual aggressive attitude toward taking power, but seems determined to attain that objective at his own pace. For the Miyazawa faction, which since before the general election criticized the "Dump Kaifu" movement and made clear its support for the Kaifu cabinet, it will be very difficult to take the lead among factions in displaying a "posture aimed at the future" now that the political situation is relatively stable following the election.

In the personnel shifts following the general election, former Defense Agency Director Koichi Kato, regarded as a candidate for one of the top 3 party posts, was deprived of his position by Executive Council Chairman Nishioka; and in order to suppress discontent within the faction over the fact that "former members of the New Liberal Club are being given preferential treatment," the inclusion of Mr. Kohno in the cabinet was put off for the time being. [Kato, Nishioka, and Kohno are all members of the Miyazawa faction.] Miyazawa himself recognizes that discord reigns within the faction.

Following the general election, a new antagonism, called the "K-K War," began to arise between the groups affiliated with Kohno, who had traveled around the country in support of other candidates from the faction; and Kato, a lifelong member of the Kochikai (Miyazawa faction) who is regarded as Miyazawa's political heir.

Each time the two men separately hold meetings with new Diet members, in the words of one attendee "The schemes to entice those present into joining [Kato's or Kohno's] group are only partially concealed."

This kind of discord is linked to the weakness of Miyazawa's "centripetal force"; and has led to criticism of the insufficient strength of the faction's central leadership, such as one young member's comment that "it would be better to stop playing at being a faction, and for the leaders to engage in constructive discussions."

In the Miyazawa faction, which is said to have no strategy for taking power, what is now being conceived is a response to greet the expiration next fall of Kaifu's term as LDP president.

As evidenced by the comments of an associate of Miyazawa's that "with the integration of the European Community in 1992, we are coming to a period where relations between Japan and Europe, like those between Japan and the United States, will be difficult. It would be best to have a politician who possesses the ability to respond to this situation," it is hoped that Miyazawa's turn will come.

However, even so there is no change in his "waiting stance." The fact that the same associate was compelled to say, "It is doubtful whether that can really be called a strategy. However, now is a time when he should devote all of his efforts to maintaining the unity of the faction" reveals the weakness of the Miyazawa faction.

[5 May 90 p 2]

[Fifth article in series: "The Komoto Faction—Using Problems to Its Advantage"]

[Text] **The Komoto Faction**

At a "Shiwasukai" gathering of the secretaries general of each faction of the Liberal Democratic Party [LDP], held at a hotel near the Diet building on the evening of 20 April, former Deputy Prime Minister Kanemaru, the chairman of the Takeshita faction, made an appearance. The interim report on the Japan-U.S. Structural Impediments Initiative [SII] talks was settled, and Diet operations were running smoothly, so the meeting began in an atmosphere of harmony; but when Komoto faction Secretary General Tetsuo Kondo arrived late, Kanemaru thundered, "The representative of the party president's faction must never be late!" [Prime Minister and LDP President Kaifu is a member of the Komoto faction.] Takeshita faction Secretary General Kozo Watanabe added, "From now on the prime minister should listen with humility to the opinions of those in the party."

This scene could have been described as an attempt by the largest faction to overpower Prime Minister Kaifu, who has displayed a firm posture backed by the high rate of support for his government.

Because of the circumstances surrounding the birth of the government, and because the prime minister comes from the smallest faction in the LDP, the Kaifu cabinet has been called a weak government, but the political situation has settled down, and the government is even beginning to appear stable. By getting through the present economic friction between Japan and the United States, the prime minister has strengthened his self-confidence in the preservation of his government, and the one-time "Dump Kaifu" movement has completely vanished.

However, current circumstances do not allow the Komoto faction as a whole to be optimistic. It is inevitable that in the Diet session following the extended vacation, the problem of the continuation or abolition of the consumption tax will once again be put in the limelight. This summer brings the final round of negotiations in the Japan-U.S. SII talks; and this fall reform of the electoral system, which the prime minister himself looks forward to with "indomitable resolve" as the "most important problem to be solved," begins in earnest. With the background of the situation in the Diet, where the LDP controls the lower house and the opposition the upper house, the movement toward cooperation with the opposition parties will no doubt become more serious.

It is said that, in the words of one faction leader, "The ups and downs of the prime minister are the ups and downs of the Komoto faction," but the reality is that there is almost no chance of Kaifu's having the leadership to manage the political situation. The problem is such that one veteran faction leader said, "So far the Kaifu administration has gone so smoothly that it's frightening. Kaifu is lucky; there is no other way to put it. How long will that luck continue?"

For the Komoto faction, the only possible strategy for maintaining power is, according to one faction leader, to "continuously come up with important policies, and keep the 'Dump Kaifu' forces within the party silent and on the run." In other words the faction must seize hold of the difficult problems it faces and use them as weapons for the maintenance of power.

In addition, the government must maintain its high rate of support, around 50 percent in various opinion polls. That strategy is, while preserving Kaifu's popularity, to spread the idea that "for the time being, there is no one to replace Kaifu."

However, either strategy contains the hidden danger of a "double-edged sword," in that, according to one faction leader, "if we are too forward, we cannot help but invite an immediate backlash within the party." It seems that managing the political situation will continue to require walking a tightrope; maintaining party unity while avoiding "sticking out."

* Various LDP Leaders Profiled

* Shintaro Abe

902B0103A Tokyo SHUKAN GENDAI in Japanese 19 Apr 90 pp 187-189—FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Text] "The premiership is matter of fate." "Since I became sick, I have become a withered man." "The Kaifu Regime has no base within the party, but he is not unfriendly."—Watchful of the Soviet Union and the United States, the chairman of the Seiwa-kai is quite eager to be in charge of the government and speaks out frankly about the situation in the party. Is it really fine with him?

U.S. Visit Also Possible if Demanded by Party

[SHUKAN GENDAI] The United States is opposed to the interim evaluation draft of the U.S.-Japan Structural Impediment Initiative Talks, including the Large-scale Retail Store Law, saying that Japan does not really want to do it and has no sense of crisis at all. A House of Councillors Diet member who is a friend of mine even asserts that the demands actually made of Japan by the United States in the U.S.-Japan Structural Impediment Initiative Talks are to eliminate the close relationship between industry and politicians and to reform the political system by eliminating "Diet member groups."

Abe: That is not true. The United States could not say anything that would so interfere in internal politics. It is the same for Japan since we ourselves are tied to the Diet. As concerns the Large-scale Retail Store Law, it is logical in its own way that Japan should let branch stores open freely as in the United States. Since eight years is too long, they are shortening it to a year or a year and a half. The abrogation of the Large-Scale Retail Store Act, however, also must be considered in the politics of dealing a destructive blow to the tiny businesses peculiar to Japan and small- and medium-size enterprises.

[Boxed item] The interview was conducted in the chairman's room in the Seiwai-kai office on the grounds of the Akasaka Prince Hotel. After his surgery for gallstones in the middle of April of last year, his body has become slim and his complexion was better than anticipated. They say he often goes golfing too. [end boxed item]

[SHUKAN GENDAI] What do you think of the liberalization of rice?

Abe: I have said that we should be completely self-sustaining in rice. In the future, it probably will be attacked a lot in GATT. However, Japan now imports about $7.3 billion in agricultural products from the United States. We are the biggest customer of the United States.

[SHUKAN GENDAI] The revision of antitrust laws, the increase of public works, and the issue of the Large-scale Retail Store Law are issues that Japan fundamentally must tackle sometime by itself for the future of Japan.

Abe: Not some day. They are issues that must be handled now. But it is unreasonable to do it as the United States says immediately at a moment's notice. Take public works, for example. Although Japan is the second greatest economic power in the world, sewers are less than 40 percent in general use and we are far behind in parks compared to advanced nations of the world. Social funds for harbors and roads are all the same. They say they cannot participate in them in Japan, but I have said how much of an effort have they made to participate? When Japanese firms go to the United States, they observe American business practices. It is proper that when they come to Japan, they should observe Japanese business practices. It is an international rule to respect the other's country.

[SHUKAN GENDAI] Unfortunately, although your name was touted as a special ambassador, Nobuo Matsunaga, former ambassador to the United States, unexpectedly was appointed as the prime minister's special envoy and went to the United States. You indicated displeasure at the "pass over."

Abe: I never said such a thing. As to the visit to the United States, there had been talk of it many times in the past and if that were the formal opinion within the party, naturally I would go.

[SHUKAN GENDAI] However, we are now facing a turning point in history where the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are changing and the EC is changing. Therefore, a politician who can take strong leadership is required.

Abe: I felt when I was Foreign Minister that the most important thing was the signing of a Japanese-Soviet peace treaty to finish postwar diplomacy. Another is to resolve the relationship with North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). Thus, this was the third time I met Gorbachev on my recent visit to the Soviet Union. Viewed from his decision-making power and power to act, or rather, his ideas, I believed we could not complete postwar diplomacy without him. Previous Soviet leaders had continued to say that no mention could be made of the four northern islands unless the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty was abrogated. Gorbachev told me clearly that he valued the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, that Japan has progressed as a non-military nation due to the treaty, that it has brought the prosperity of Japan today, and has come to protect the peace of the Far East. Gromyko (former Foreign Minister) had contempt for Japan and did not recognize Japan, saying that Japan was a defeated nation and what has a nation defeated in war to say.

We Should Support Perestroyka

[SHUKAN GENDAI] How will Japanese-Soviet relations change in the future?

Abe: I made an eight-point proposal on Japan teaching business knowhow or product management technology, later to have survey teams come and also cultural exchanges and also have trade fairs. In exchange, the Soviet Union would cooperate in observing Japanese fishing bases, or the realization of visits to graves on Etorofu Island. Such Japanese-Soviet cooperation is progressing, but I believe it can be done on a wider scale with the support of perestroyka. There will be no resolution of the territorial issue if Japan will not budge an inch unless the territory is returned as has been the case so far.

I Cannot Criticize the Current Regime

[SHUKAN GENDAI] Speaking of leaders, there probably are many politicians abroad who know former prime minister Nobusuke Kishi, your father-in-law.

Abe: Many do. Secretary of Commerce Mosbacher came to see me when he visited Japan in March and brought as a souvenir a golf ball signed with the presidential insignia from President Bush. He brought the message that "Mister Abe's father-in-law is Nobusuke Kishi and when my father was a senator during the time of President Eisenhower, he and Kishi often played golf together, so I know Mr Abe very well and give him this." After all, it is important for politicians to have human relationships.

[SHUKAN GENDAI] Does the signed ball from President Bush mean that he wants you to come to the United States as prime minister and president?

Abe: No, no. That is not so. To say such a thing, on the other hand, in more ways than one would.... (laughs).

[Begin boxed item] As a result of the previous general election, the Abe Faction increased by 7 people to 62. Combined with the 24 people in the House of Councilors, it boasts of being second in power after the Takeshita Faction. They have one of the three key party posts with Mutsuki Kato as chairman of the Policy Research Council and have brought in four people into the cabinet with Taro Nakayama as Foreign Minister, Tomio Yamamoto as Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Akira Ono as Minister of Transport, and Shunpei Tsukahara as Minister of Labor. [end boxed item]

[SHUKAN GENDAI] Soon the time will come for you to stand as prime minister and party president....

Abe: I am not thinking about that at all. The premiership is fate. At any rate, I have been sick and have become a withered human being. (laughs)

[SHUKAN GENDAI] That is faintheartedness. How is your health?

Abe: My body is fine. Not bad at all. I went to Moscow where it was 30 degrees below zero and ran about in the general election. To be sure, those around me said it was not good, but they didn't say it too strongly.... (laughs)

[SHUKAN GENDAI] The course is already established for "Abe to be next." Opinions are increasing within the party that "the Kaifu regime cannot take party leadership."

Abe: No. Now everyone is cooperating to help Kaifu. He is working with the support of everyone. On the whole, it could not be that much different whoever does it now. In that sense, Kaifu is trying very hard in his own way. Considering the party structure, he does not have a base, but everyone is supporting him. He is not such an unfriendly person.

[SHUKAN GENDAI] Does that mean he has passing marks?

Abe: At any rate, he is doing his best now. That must be appreciated. We can't criticize the present regime that much. That is because we must support it with all our might.

[SHUKAN GENDAI] Nevertheless, it was said that Abe would be after Takeshita.

Abe: It is a fact that I was a candidate at that time. But, I don't know about that. (laughs) Such is the political world. Therefore, you can only do your best in your own way.

* Labor Minister Tsukahara

902B0100A Tokyo KANKAI in Japanese
May 90 pp 74-83—FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Labor Minister Shumpei Tsukahara interviewed by political commentator Hisao Imai; date and place not given]

[Text] Imai: The Diet went round and round and got nowhere in regard to the supplementary budget and related bills; will not this also begin to have an effect on the spring labor offensive?

Tsukahara: It appears that the private sector side has a proper plan when it speaks, so I think that at least the present state of the Diet will not exert an adverse influence on the spring labor offensive. Both the labor side and the management side have truly studied the basic policy of the country, the present state of the economy of all Japan and the present state of the world well, and it appears that both sides are carrying on an adult debate in a scrupulous manner, so I think this situation will not exert an influence.

Imai: Then even if the budget is disputed in various ways, and becomes provisional and influences business conditions slightly, it will not clash directly with the spring offensive just because of that, right.

Tsukahara: Yes.

Imai: The yen is weak, and stock prices, too, have fallen again. At the time of the election it was said that "stocks will decline if political power goes to the Japan Socialist Party [JSP]," but what does this mean under a situation in which the Liberal Democratic Party [LDP] has gained a stable majority?

Tsukahara: There are people who said "stocks will not decline if the LDP wins," but stocks declined in spite of the fact that the LDP won.

Imai: When I asked Michio Watanabe, he conversely assumed a defiant attitude, saying "we got by with this much because it is an LDP government," but I think that the LDP, too, cannot talk too big just because it won. As might be expected, the world is watching. Kabutocho [the Tokyo financial district] is watching.

Tsukahara: It appears that even within the LDP there are not too many who perceive that we won the last election. When you ask all sorts of people, as might be expected, it appears to have been a choice of systems. Up till now, those who disliked both the LDP and the JSP were voting for the Komeito or the Japan Democratic Socialist Party or some such, but this time it would be a JSP government even if you voted for the Komeito or the Japan Democratic Socialist Party, so they flocked to the new candidates of the JSP. Therefore, the number of votes for new candidates increased so much it is almost unbelievable. On the other hand, there is a considerable number of incumbents who were unexpectedly defeated through carelessness. That is, the criticism of the LDP was also strong, but continuation of this system was desired. Even if people deeply impress it on their minds and talk about it, there are not too many people who make a fuss about a big victory, saying it is good that we won and so on.

Imai: Your district was comparatively safe, was it not?

Tsukahara: It was safe this time, but 50,000 votes were taken by the JSP, and 40,000 by a more senior member of the LDP, so I think the next time will be very difficult.

Imai: In the last election conservative-affiliated new candidates and JSP female condidates took votes without exception, did they not.

Tsukahara: They did. Therefore, it was very surprising to me that conservative-affiliated female candidates were unable to get too many votes. I had heard that Hiromi Matsui and Masako Noda were very fine candidates, so it was very surprising that they both were able to get only a few votes.

Imai: The wind of the Doi boom must not have blown in the conservative parties. Therefore, it is not only the choice of a system. What do you think of Doi?

Tsukahara: She is an appealing person even seen from our perspective. At this precise time we are being beat hollow by her, so if asked whether we like her or dislike her, we might answer that we dislike her, but when one is permitted to have contact with her, she is, as might be

expected, a marvelous person. It is like that even when we look at her, so I think, as might be expected, it is natural for her popularity to grow.

Imai: What are Doi's good points?

Tsukahara: One is that she is frank. Another is that she explains everything in a way that is easy to understand. If one asks what a politician needs when the bureaucratic structure becomes this strong, and particularly what a politician needs in order to be accepted by the general public, I think it is a matter of how much understanding the person has, and how persuasive the person is. To comprehend the present state of Japan, and explain it to the people, I think those are the most important points for a politician. On those points, Doi has the power to understand, and is also persuasive; moreover, when she explains, she does it by language that is very easy to understand. I think she is fully equipped with the elements for being popular.

Former Prime Minister Takeshita Is Number One in Understanding and Persuasiveness

Imai: How is Prime Minister Kaifu on the points of understanding and persuasiveness?

Tsukahara: Of course he has them. I think the existence of Kaifu is absolutely part of the grand background to the conservative forces having been permitted to win to some extent in the last election. There is also all kinds of criticism concerning Kaifu's speeches, but even if we listen to them, he is persuasive regarding each individual point, and he also understands matters correctly, so, I suspect that, as might be expected, it can be said that we have been able come this far because it was Kaifu.

Imai: Are you saying that Kaifu and Doi are the champions of the conservatives and the reformers?

Tsukahara: I think that is true at least in the aspects of understanding and persuasiveness. Former Prime Minister Takeshita, too, is a person of tremendous understanding and persuasiveness, but his language may be a bit more difficult than that used by Kaifu. But I served under Takeshita when he was minister of finance and secretary general of the LDP, and speaking from the experience of that time, I suspect that Takeshita is the person in the present Diet who has the most understanding and persuasiveness. The media write about him things like "his language is clear, his meaning is unclear," so everyone ends up listening with that sense, so it becomes strange, but I think Takeshita is first among LDP Diet members on the points of understanding and persuasiveness.

Imai: How about Shintaro Abe?

Tsukahara: Abe has tremendous power to understand, and he is also marvelously creative. But he is sometimes misunderstood, because he speaks in a roundabout way, or something, and he does not make vague even those places which I think should be made a bit more vague. If one listens calmly, he is not saying anything at all that is mistaken. I think he is a person to whom things can be entrusted with peace of mind if he becomes the leader of Japan.

Imai: He has a kind face, but he is unexpectedly bold, and he does not mince words, and stands firm when it is time to do so. When one considers Japanese politics in the future, I think that the one after Kaifu will be Abe, as might be expected, but how is his health?

Tsukahara: He appears to be healthy. It seems that lately he plays more than one round of golf, and after golf, he never fails to play majong, too. On the Sunday of the week before last, I had gone to my constituency when a telephone call came (from Abe), in which he said that he had finished golf, and invited me over because he was now going to play majong. Then, when I went, he was saying that his golf score was 93 or some such, so it appears that he has begun to recover, does it not? Because after the study at last year's Seiwakai he was doing 50 to 60 strokes in one-half round.

Imai: But he has gotten a bit thinner, has he not.

Tsukahara: It appears that his weight has also begun to return lately. Because he eats a lot, all things considered.

Imai: Incidentally, you have not gotten at all thinner, have you. Are you making some kind of effort to lose weight?

Tsukahara: I made an effort when I first got married, but I was completely unable to endure going without food. Just around the time when I became a Diet member, there was talk in America that stout people cannot achieve prominence, but nowadays that, too, has begun to soften, so.... Still, when I was watching television the other day, they were doing something like "choosing fat people from all over Japan," and they were ridiculing very fat people, so I suppose I must lose a little weight after all.

Imai: But stout people are amiable, and politicians who, like you, have a taste for humorous monologues, have the very important merit of making Japan bright and cheerful.

Tsukahara: I, too, study with all my might, and wish that I could dispense accurate information with a feeling that it is very witty, but I still have not studied enough, so....

Imai: But you also have the experience of having been parliamentary vice minister for labor, and you are not unrelated to the Ministry of Labor.

Tsukamoto: To tell the truth, the first connection of my father (Toshiro Tsukahara; former minister of labor) to the Ministry of Labor was also as the secretary of Labor Minister Kaneshichi Masuda. By that, he did things like translating documents from the General Headquarters of the Occupation and so on related to the Public Corporations and Government Enterprises Labor Relations Act. Therefore, I have a very deep relationship with the Ministry of Labor.

Will Grapple With Measures on Employment of the Elderly

Imai: Incidentally, how is Prime Minister Kaifu's leadership?

Tsukahara: We hold press conferences when cabinet meetings end, right? I, too, have been asked by members of the Ministry of Labor press corps to tell them exactly each and every thing that cabinet ministers have stated, but the prime minister exercises scrupulous control over every single word, so cabinet meetings never have discord or anything. At the last cabinet meeting, too, when a statement was made by the minister for international trade and industry concerning the minister for home affairs in regard to the Large-Scale Retail Store Act, in a form which appeared as though he had a complaint, the prime minister immediately mediated between them, and by that means, it was settled in a satisfactory manner. Reporters say that it seems as though in previous cabinet meetings there was all kinds of talk, but that sort of thing is completely inconceivable. I feel that a single policy line is running through in a proper manner. As things stand now, I feel that the prime minister's punctilious instructions are attentive to detail. It may be that the prime minister, himself, has also gained self-confidence. If we take it that, as reporters say, all sorts of arguments occurred at previous cabinet meetings and the cabinet meeting did not arrive at a consensus, it may be that Prime Minister Kaifu was restraining himself in deference to others. At this point he has begun to exercise leadership. After all, there are those in the present cabinet, too, who seem likely to be very fault-finding.

Imai: You mean he has gradually begun to hit his stride, right. Well, we will now begin talking about questions of policy; first of all, concerning measures on employment of the elderly. From now on we will be entering a time in which the population is aging, so the number of old people will go on increasing, and elderly Japanese dislike just lying about or dawdling, so they want to go on working forever. How will the Ministry of Labor respond to that feeling?

Tsukahara: Last year one out of five persons 55 years or older was working. It is said that in the 21st century this will become one person in four. My first job was to have the Employment Council conduct deliberations in order to secure a place of employment for people up to age 65. At the Employment Council it was proposed to establish a system of mandatory retirement at age 60, and to devise in a proper manner basic national measures for the purpose of employment up to age 65. We will revise the Elderly Employment Stability Act based on this. After all, if the average lifespan continues to increase, the possibility will also emerge of the time after work becoming longer than the period of work. I think this revision, itself, will become a sounding board, and new policies will again emerge, but first of all, for the time being I would like to do this one thing.

Imai: But even if they grow old, human beings have pride, so, contrary to what one might expect, saying that it is probably better to use them than for them to be idle will amount to something like putting a damper on their desire to work. In that respect, measures for the elderly are needed which skillfully bring out the experience and ability of the elderly, and are a plus both for the elderly themselves and for society. Because the present situation is one in which, even if they wish to work, there is nothing but miscellaneous duties.

Tsukahara: The Ministry of Labor's "Elderly Staff Center" is introducing such unique jobs as papering shoji, refurbishing tatami and landscape gardening which, by doing work which makes use of their experience and skills, contributes to the locality as well as participating in society; in such places as Hitachi, where I live, the elderly are all participating happily. But this is strictly something which attempts a gentle withdrawal from one's working life; it is not a real measure for employment of the elderly.

Imai: After all, in foreign countries many workers look forward to retirement age, but in the case of Japan, they conversely fear retirement age.

Tsukahara: There is a recent cartoon series called "The Retirement Boys," and it appears to take as its theme the post-retirement plan of a person who has been the branch manager of a bank, and life after retirement for all sorts of people; it is extremely interesting, and it appears to be popular. I think this problem will become a big policy task in the future.

Response to the Question of Foreign Workers

Imai: Basically, the phenomenon of a shortage of labor is becoming worse, so the question of foreign workers has surfaced. It appears that figures have come out that it will be impossible to maintain present economic development unless about 2.7 million foreigners are admitted by the end of this century; is this true?

Tsukahara: I have not yet seen the data, so I cannot say anything definite concerning that figure. But upon becoming minister and studying things, I, too, was surprised; there is a very great difference in employment by region. There are places with high employment and places with little employment. And although things have improved quite a bit since the Male and Female Equal Employment Opportunity Act came into being, there are places where employment of females is still low. And there are not enough places of employment for the elderly, either. Therefore, first of all we must strive scrupulously to guarantee employment in Japan.

I think there are a number of views concerning foreign workers; first, if one bases it on an international viewpoint, by nature the best thing for them, too, is to be able to work in their respective countries. However, there have emerged people who want to work in Japan because they do not have a place to work in their own country, or because the pay is low. In order to go on contributing

within the international community in the future. Japan, too, must make more of an effort so that places of employment will come into being in each country. Now, too, Japan appears to be doing quite a bit of guidance of technicians, or some such, so that it will be all right even if it builds all sorts of factories, and I think Japan must first go on doing that. And in the case of having foreigners work in Japan, it must under no circumstances become a feeling like bringing foreigners and making them work, in a form like the conscript labor of the past. Even if they should accept, it is necessary for Japan to prepare an acceptance system so that it can accept them under scrupulous conditions.

But have the people who are now saying that they want foreign workers actually considering it that deeply? Or is it a matter of them simply wanting workers, whatever the case? If it is the latter, there will also emerge the case of Japan being subjected internationally to dangerous evaluation in various aspects. After all, even now there are as many as 100,000 people just among those who are remaining in Japan illegally, so if it works out that it is recognized to a certain extent by rules, it will end up being a huge number of people. If that happens, new problems will arise there. And there is also the question of how far the present Japanese economy will actually go. If, when something goes wrong with the Japanese economy, we easily discharge people who were once hired, problems will emerge again. Because in fact, in 1976 and 1977, when I ran for the Diet, even Hitachi, Ltd. was laying off people. It happened about 10 years ago. I think this, too, is an important question which must be considered with care.

Imai: The present situation appears to be one of "we want people come what may," but that is manual labor. Furthermore, they are saying that they want foreigners in the so-called 3 D fields (dirty, dangerous and demanding). It cannot be helped if this is taken to be Japanese egoism.

Tsukahara: If such were the case, it would resemble what was done during wartime, so it would even affect international trust in Japan.

Imai: Generally speaking, Japanese have come to dislike work. Japanese used to be a people who did not regard it as a hardship to live by the sweat of one's brow, but recently that has ceased to be the case.

Tsukahara: In 1969 I entered Dentsu Inc. and associated with people from all sorts of companies, but at least at that time, there were more people who said that they would not mind if the number of workers was reduced further, so they wanted to receive double their salary. But lately it appears to be a bit different. I, too, have become the old generation, so there may be a divergence of sensibility in that area. We must listen more closely to the ideas of young people.

Do Not Follow in the Footsteps of Your Predecessor!

Imai: The possibility has emerged, has it not, of having thrust at you the cross question of whether, as things stand, foreign workers will be brought in by something like the conscript labor system of the past, the kind which you are worried about.

Tsukahara: I think if that happens it will begin to become absolutely impossible.

Imai: However, the blue collar labor force is low in absolute terms, so there is the pressing problem of how to supplement it.

Tsukahara: But I think in the future each company will begin to economize on labor, so at this moment there is a shortage of labor, but conversely, I think there will also be a danger of there being too many people. In fact, in spite of the fact that the number of people at Dentsu has not changed at all from when I was there, the headquarters building has become three times as large. The three-fold amount that has been added is all machines. And it has become more cramped than when I was employed there. In that sense, consideration of a response to machines in the future may become a new political problem for the Ministry of Labor, too.

Imai: After all, a knowledge-intensive type industry like Dentsu can rely upon machines to any extent at all.

Tsukahara: Now a tremendous amount of machinery has come into so-called subcontracters, and the sub-sub contractors below them. I hear that people will not come to work for them otherwise. They have almost unbelievably tremendous machines. Therefore, one cannot make the simple argument on this that one side says it wants to work and the other side says it wants to employ people, so what is wrong with it.

Imai: Because there actually are precedents, are there not. Whether one takes West Germany or France or America, places that took in large numbers of foreigners, inviting them to come because they were in difficulties, conversely, have begun to be oppressed by foreign workers who now, not only do not return to their own lands, but summon their wives, and increase more and more in number. When that happens, it is too late. But there is a possibility that today's Japan will follow in their footsteps.

Tsukahara: At present we made the regulations of the Immigration Control Act strict, and are strictly enforcing them, so I think there is no worry if we go on as we are now, but that possibility may arise if we make one mistake in dealing with it in the future.

Imai: This is not a problem of the Ministry of Labor alone, it is the political policy of a large country, so you can also seek liaison, consultation and cooperation of each ministry, but you will have to be the one who sets things in motion.

Tsukahara: I am now having the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry put out a considerable amount of research results, so I plan to study that, too.

Imai: But it will not be solved by just by saying that foreign workers will not work out; we must have enough sense of mission to go into the partner country that is exporting labor and go so far as to help it out.

Tsukahara: It appears that all the companies are striving with a considerable sense of mission. Because the best thing is to build in each country a proper place of employment, and to go on making things which can pay a reasonable amount.

Shortening Working Hours and Measures on Women's Labor

Imai: A little while ago you said that in the old days there were many people who said that they were willing to work more, so they wanted double their salary: now it has become opposite, so the shortening of working hours has become young people's greatest demand. Will it be all right if we simply shorten working hours?

Tsukahara: On this, everyone's opinion is in agreement. The government, too, in its five-year plan for management of the economy, said that it would shorten working hours as much as possible, toward a level of 1,800 (annual) working hours by Fiscal Year 1992, and both the employers' side and the workers' side are saying that they "want to create a social environment with the "leisure time" befitting a great economic power." Therefore, matters concerning the shortening of hours are not problems on which labor and management clash with each other; they are questions which everyone discusses together. But as to how to approach 1,800 hours, it becomes a matter of carrying out a five-day work week system completely, taking all annual holidays, and limiting overtime to about 150 hours. This goal is high, but we must work it out by doing such things as a phased shortening of the working hours established by law, expanding the spread of holidays on successive days, and introducing flexible time o' holidays for rest. But what absolutely must be consid d at such times, is that it is possible in the case of larg scale companies, but, as one might expect, the smaller the company the more difficult it becomes. In promoting the shortening of hours, too, the path which one aims at differs according to the scale of the enterprise. The labor side naturally has the opinion that it is better not to change things according to the scale of the enterprise. But I think, actually, the intensity of response is bound to differ in large companies and small companies. Therefore, in regard to shortening hours, I think the most important points are to have people put out all kinds of ideas, and have them put into practice in succession what can be done, and also the question of how far it will be possible to give consideration to small companies at that time. Because "leisure time" being produced by shortening working hours is not at all a bad thing.

Imai: Even if you shorten working hours, it is meaningless unless it produces "leisure time." Because nothing would come of it if, like U.S. public service workers and policemen and military personnel, people were to work during the day and be taxi drivers at night.

Tsukahara: Because that would be the same as working overtime.

Imai: Speaking of overtime, the windows of Japanese government offices are lit up and people are working overtime till 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock, and in some cases 10 o'clock, are they not.

Tsukahara: It may be interesting to consider new rules for government offices first of all. The Ministry of Labor, too, must be at work when the Diet is in session, and the budget, too, has two times: the preliminary request and the actual request, and after that one must make diverse policies looking toward the next thing, so, in the final analysis the whole year is taken up.

Imai: I do not say it is true of all public service workers, but the hours of involved public servants have not become the least bit shorter.

Tsukahara: That is also true of part of the private sector.

Imai: In closing, please say something concerning measures on women's work.

Tsukahara: In regard to women's work, there has been more improvement since the Male-Female Employment Opportunity Equality Act went into operation, but there are still big problems. What I think was good is that the Male-Female Employment Opportunity Equality Act came into being, so the capability of women as a work force was recognized. Therefore, next we must go on solving the various problems in which it is difficult for women to work because they are women. We must attempt to promote the spread toward establishment of a system of child-care leave, and we must also grapple with such things as the question of a system for rehiring of women, the question of part time employment and the creation of an environment in which women will find it easy to work. Anyhow, it has become clear how important women are in the work place, so I think, as a nation, too, we would like to grapple with creating the kind of systems and rules under which we can have women build wonderful homes, and also operate in the work place.

Imai: There is no difference between men and women in equality of opportunity, but basically the female work force is not suited for manual labor and physical labor, is it.

Tsukahara: No, that is not quite true. Nowadays there are also female truck drivers, and my wife's family is in the lumber business, and in spite of the fact that I cannot carry lumber, my wife's sister-in-law can carry it. In short, it is a knack. Recently the National Defense Academy, too, said that it would open to women, and there are also female police officers, and in the Diet, too, female Diet guards are given the same work as male Diet

guards. Ultimately, it is unclear to what extent there is a physical difference, but discrimination between male and female has begun to disappear in all sorts of places.

Imai: We will look forward to still more of your activities. Thank you very much for giving us this interview.

* Shin Kanemaru

902B0118A Tokyo CHUO KORON in Japanese
10 May 90 pp 218-227—FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Article by Takao Iwami, MAINICHI SHIMBUN editorial staff writer]

[Text] **Shin Kanemaru: The Magic of A Dauntless Agitator; The Mystery of a Man Who Reigns, Wielding the Power of Life and Death in the Liberal Democratic Party While Waging Great Feats in the Game of "Political Reorganization"; Criticism by Nakasone as "A Fearsome Fellow"**

The world of Japanese politics forms an old fashioned, irrational, emotional society. Recently, the complicated and difficult to understand design of Japanese industrial society was pointed out by the U.S.-Japan Structural Impediments Initiative [SII]talks, but politics probably is a world filled with enigmas that is even more difficult to explain.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Shin Kanemaru, said to be number one in actual power in the political world, is the most typical person representing this emotional society. Almost without exception, Japanese politics can be called Kanemaru-ism. If it were not for Kanemaru-ism, not only would it be difficult to survive, but elimination inadvertently would be the fate. The powerful politician who is at the opposite pole from Kanemaru is Kiichi Miyazawa. Naturally, the two do not get along.

In criticism of Miyazawa, Kanemaru formerly has said, "When I hear the responses of that fellow Miyazawa in the Diet, unexpected words come out and I feel that his skill in responding to the minority parties is outstanding. Therefore, unmistakably he is clearheaded. However, he must have a little more vulgarness if he is to become prime minister and president. He should be a little more crude. He should not think like he is measuring with a yardstick, as they say, but be vague and crafty, at times not voicing what he knows in his gut. There is a future in being a little more dumb."

In talking about Miyazawa, Kanemaru is talking about himself: vulgar, crude, versatile, vague, gutsy, crafty, dumb. Kanemaru possesses these more than anyone else and has used them to develop the Kanemaru style of politics. None are his real nature, however, and in theatrical terms they are like a kind of choreography or costume.

Miyazawa probably is at a disadvantage in the emotional society because he lacks such attributes, but the differences between Miyazawa and Kanemaru lie elsewhere. With some retrospect on the stage of Kanemaru's activities, the Kanemaru character gradually comes to be seen.

One scene was October 1984, the final scene of the issue of Yasuhiro Nakasone's re-election as president. At the time, Kanemaru was serving as party General Council chairman, representing the Tanaka faction. Nakasone had sought Kanemaru's cooperation beforehand since around February to obtain the support of the Tanaka faction, and Kanemaru had received the word from Tanaka that "re-election was okay."

At the beginning of October, however, support for Susumu Nikaido suddenly happened. It was a scheme in which Zenko Suzuki and Takeo Fukuda would unite with both the Komeito and Democratic Socialist Parties to create a coalition government with Nikaido at the head. Seeing it was not a simple situation, Kanemaru moved to bring the party under control, but there was the counterargument from influential leaders that "As everyone says, it is not Nakasone's time either for the nation or the people. What about you?"

Kanemaru sharply replied back, "If it goes too far, I and Nakasone are ready to stab each other."

Later, Kanemaru reflected "I was really walking on a tightrope. Perhaps those threatening words were effective, but Nakasone's re-election was realized."

The keywords were "stab each other." It is by no means clear what that specifically means. Was it that he himself would resign from the Diet if it came to pulling Nakasone down from his seat as prime minister, or was it just an expression of a sense of tragedy aimed at a kind of intimidating effect?

At any rate, Nakasone was deeply appreciative and told him, "I thought you were a fearsome fellow but thanks to you, I narrowly escaped with my life. I shall call you at the very beginning tomorrow (in personnel assignments)." The next day, he appointed Kanemaru to secretary general, the number two party post.

Another scene was the evening of 23 January 1985, at the Japanese restaurant Katsura in Tsukiji, Tokyo. A secret conference was held to create a Takeshita regime. All 25 people of the Tanaka faction gathered by twos and threes in secret action. Kanemaru gave a speech saying that "Today, I would like to make a pledge of blood ..."

Takeshita also expressed his determination saying that "I shall exhaust all of Noboru Takeshita and I am prepared to sacrifice myself for the sake of the nation."

It was a scene just like the eve of the Meiji Restoration. The gathering that same night formed the matrix that shortly became the forerunner of the Takeshita faction. The Sosei-kai [Government Founding Society] hoisted its banner and the mortal struggle of Kanemaru, Takeshita, and Kakuei Tanaka began but on the evening of 27 February, a little over a month after the secret conference, Tanaka suddenly collapsed.

The key words at this time were "blood pledge." It was not actually sealed in blood like the time when Ichiro Nakagawa previously created the Seiran-kai [Wind Blowing Through Verdure Society], but a special atmosphere was fomented by including the word "blood" and Kanemaru was well cast to build that up effectively.

"Stab each other" or "pledge of blood" are emotional terms of little relation to ordinary people and even more so, could not be used at all by Miyazawa or others of the rational persuasion. However, in an actual political scene that may be momentous as well, it cannot be denied that the furious expressions of the gangster world are certainly effective in pushing ahead in a difficult undertaking. Kanemaru is the greatest user of them in his time.

Kanemaru's charismatic power, which also gives rise to some violence, is not enough to move mountains, but will build new peaks. Nakasone's criticism of him as a "fearsome man" was not necessarily an exaggeration and that is the first thing which can be pointed out about Kanemaru-ism.

Director of the "Emotional World"

Koichi Hamada, who is an admirer of Kanemaru, wrote this in his book "Here Goes Unworthy Ko Hama":

"The magic of the man called Shin Kanemaru can only be described in his way of thinking about things and way of associating with people. He is the most preeminent of today's politicians. What I think is remarkable about Kanemaru is that, all in all, he listens well to what people say. He is a good listener. I and others would immediately lash out from anger without listening, but the boss Kanemaru really listens well to what people have to say. For example, even in chats with newspaper reporters, before you know it he has made them into his own advisors and brains. He embraces all associations in his heart, not particular people of one association. He even listens to the words of reporters who are lead only by theory. Moreover, he does not just listen. He respects very much the thinking of each individual. Therefore, everyone says they don't know what Kanemaru is about, but that is absurd. That is only outwardly. His mind moves with tremendous speed and he makes accurate decisions quickly..."

It has not only been pointed out by Hamada. There are not a few people who have noted Kanemaru's approach to people. That is because many are skillful in talking, but people who have "listening" as a strong point are rare in the political world. Although there are scenes where Kanemaru will use a dagger in a contest as mentioned above, he has the special skill of getting most opponents to come under his thumb by turning into a listener. He is decidedly not talkative.

As his own political philosophy, Kanemaru has four principles of which he always speaks: 1) be reasonable, 2) sweat for people, 3) value human relationships, and 4) counsel those who are in trouble. It is quite far from philosophy. It seems like the love and duty of an emotional society, the rules of association. It thoroughly carries out humanity first, but isn't it the second point about Kanemaru-ism?

Priority is given to down-to-earth feeling and reasoning rather than lofty ideology.

Moreover, the "emotional world" created by Kanemaru is uncommon in two aspects. Concerning his dealings with Nakasone, for example, Kanemaru says that "It is patting as if striking. It is striking as if patting. Isn't that politics? This is indeed my relationship with Nakasone. I previously had said publicly that I was a 'Nakasone-hater,' but there was no telling that I would help Nakasone as much as possible afterward."

There are complications in this. In the fall of 1982, in the presidential election after the resignation of Suzuki, the Tanaka faction decided to support Nakasone because of the strong sentiments of Tanaka, but there was opposition swirling within the faction such as "Why another faction?" Even without it, Nakasone was a man cut off from the political world. The discord with Kanemaru had been rumored for a long time. In an executive meeting of the Tanaka faction, it was Kanemaru who gave the last persuasive speech.

"What you all say is all true. However, this world is not like you think. If the boss says right, it is right and if he says left, it is left. If you disagree although the boss says right, you must leave this faction. I was opposed to Nakasone before this (selection of successor after sudden death of Ohira). However, since the boss has said twice that it is Nakasone, we have the obligation such as it is. I don't want to leave here this year. I will go along with the boss and support Nakasone. Shin Kanemaru is the number one 'Nakasone-hater' in Japan. There is no mistake that I have said it."

Rather than persuasion, it was a steamroller argument of boss-gang and duty-love alone. There was no logic at all. However, the final line was effective. It was enticement appealing to the emotions to please comply because I, who am a Nakasone-hater, ask. He issued it directly without knowing at all the essentials as to whether there was some obligation between Tanaka and Nakasone.

Afterwards, Kanemaru gradually changed his evaluation of Nakasone once he had become prime minister to "he has matured" and became the fattest prop supporting the 5-year regime. There probably was repetition of the Kanemaru style training method to pat as if striking.

Tanaka and Takeshita Double Switch

Another uncommon aspect of the Kanemaru style "emotional world" is the terrific way of cutting off emotion. At the beginning of the article, I wrote that without exception, Japanese politicians are Kanemaru-ish, but this is Kanemaru's unique domain and it can be called Kanemaru's secret for dominating the political world.

Kanemaru's prior political connections will be charted. He started by entering the Sato faction with his first election at the age of 43 in May 1958. He seemed to be perplexed about deciding on the Kono faction, but three new people entered the Sato faction at that time: Kanemaru, Noboru Takeshita, and Yoshiyasu Hosoda. Takeshita was 10 years younger, but he originated from the same sake brewery in Yamanashi and Shimane and had been the boss since their days in the rank and file.

Two years later in 1960, there were the security treaty riots. At 12:05 AM on 20 May, the new security treaty was introduced in the House of Representatives plenary session and viewing a photo of the instant it was approved, a young Kanemaru is seen standing firm with his feet apart right behind the speaker, Ichiro Kiyose. This photo was carried on the cover of Life magazine in the United States. Kanemaru had rushed bearing Kiyose alone from the speaker's office that was in great chaos with the police force and picketing by the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) and placed him in the speaker's chair. The judo from his student days had been useful, but he had broken a bone in his leg. This is the only prominent story of his youth.

It shortly changed from Ikeda to the Sato Regime and Shigeru Hori, whom Kanemaru held in high esteem as a "master of politics," appeared at the fore. At the time, Hori was one of the three pillars supporting the Sato structure along with Tanaka and Fukuda. He had a chance to come in contact with him, often sitting around a table with Hori, who loved mahjongg. In January 1972, Secretary General Hori appointed Kanemaru to chair of the Diet Policy Committee despite the opposition of Sato and Tanaka. It was a big choice. This was the opportunity for him to appear on the front stage of politics.

Both Hori and Kanemaru have served as famous coordinators in postwar political history. The two seem to resemble each other, but they do not. Hori worked at the end of the Sato regime to support Fukuda and failed. Furthermore, he took the trouble to mediate between Tanaka and Fukuda and ultimately followed the path to a Fukuda regime. Under the Fukuda regime, Hori sat as speaker of the House of Representatives and appointed Kanemaru, whom he came to rely upon on, as chair of the House Management Committee.

That is the outline but in the meantime, Hori was fastidious and quick-tempered. Hori strenuously tried to prevent Fukuda from trying to leave the Tanaka regime (summer of 1974) along with Miki in criticism of money influences, but it did not go well. Hori became angry and disgusted at Fukuda's indecisive attitude and thereafter an estranged situation followed.

The Miki regime was created and 2 years later, the political world became stormy with the "Miki step down" movement from the Lockheed scandal. Hori lead the "Miki step down" movement but would not forgive Fukuda who was the most powerful candidate as successor. Kanemaru stepped in between. His exchanges with Hori at this time are interesting. Kanemaru picked a quarrel.

"How about you (Hori) becoming president."

"I don't have the ability."

"So, who is there? You say that anyone but Miki would be all right, but you say that Fukuda is no good. He may have his buttons on wrong, but is there any other candidate besides Fukuda?"

"Fukuda is no good. I have decided not to lend a hand a second time for the future of Fukuda. I absolutely will not make him president as long as i live."

"But, he will be governing for the sake of the people, not for the sake of your emotions."

"A no good person is no good."

"Would you have the seat of prime minister empty?"

It was a scene where Kanemaru rescued Hori from not being able to move because of being chained to this own emotions. He cornered the master with strong expressions such as "for the sake of your emotions." Such exchanges were repeated for a week and Hori ultimately gave way in the end.

"I leave it to you. I hand over a carte blanche." The Fukuda regime was realized. What would have happened without Kanemaru? Another coordinator might have had influence, but ultimately we don't know.

Kanemaru is not as fastidious as Hori, but he is not chained to one-sided emotions and if necessary, simply will cut them off. From Hori's standpoint, Kanemaru probably worked in the "Fukuda crush." It appears as cold-hearted, but the expression "be reasonable," cited as number one in Kanemaru's style of political philosophy, demonstrates his supernatural power. Upon reflection, Kanemaru first played a central role in creating the Tanaka regime and his feelings for Tanaka probably were strong, but he cast them aside and played a major role in supporting Takeshita. Now, he seems to be cutting off Takeshita and trying to follow a path toward an "Ozawa regime." On the eve of the inauguration of the Tanaka regime, Kanemaru stayed for a month at the Hotel New Otani and devoted himself to the presidential election. When he returned home, he had lost about 10 kilograms. "I prided myself that I was the one who created the Tanaka cabinet. On that point, Takeshita could not do it. He was chief cabinet secretary under Sato and had not risked his life for Tanaka. Because of that, his painful path was begun as if he were told by Tanaka to "mop the floor," he recollects.

The PR on his differences with Takeshita is very interesting but at any rate, the time has gone by without the Tanaka faction having a presidential candidate for close to 10 years since Tanaka resigned in November 1974.

Tanaka just burned with the ambition of restoring his regime for which there were no prospects. The reason for its existence as the largest faction was obscure and unreasonable. Right in the midst of the Nakasone re-election drama in the fall of 1984, Tanaka said, "Kanemaru, you will be speaker of the house after the next presidential election."

Kanemaru replied, "The speakership is a god on an altar. I don't think I want to become a god. I don't need the speakership." Tanaka had a hunch of the rebellion by Kanemaru and Takeshita and planned to sidetrack Kanemaru to the speakership to prevent him from being seated as secretary general. Kanemaru became the secretary general by the will of Nakasone, but remembers concerning Tanaka, "to have such a boss...."

Since he had cast his lot with Tanaka, there would be no turn for Takeshita at all and the future of the Tanaka faction also was not bright. Kanemaru made the decision to break with Tanaka.

Now, five years later, the same kind of opposition is proceeding between him and Takeshita. The Takeshita regime was born with the self-sacrifice of Kanemaru. After his resignation in April last year, the relationship between Takeshita and Kanemaru became worse day by day. Resembling another time, Takeshita, like Tanaka, planned to set up Kanemaru as speaker of the house directly after the February general election. Kanemaru flatly refused, "I absolutely will not." Yoshio Sakurauchi, former chair of the old Nakasone faction was appointed as speaker. It seems that Takeshita's behavior has been fully unsatisfactory to Kanemaru and, like Tanaka, his aim to step up again to prime minister has bought the anger of Kanemaru.

"It is not that there is no one so that the same person must be prime minister two or three times. There are not many, but." Kanemaru is prepared to stop Takeshita's return to power.

The Takeshita faction itself, in the belief that it should yield to the younger generation, seems to be burning with the long-cherished desire to shift to the era of Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa, on whom Kanemaru particularly has his eye.

When you think about it, there is a touch of bloodthirstiness in Kanemaru's "emotional world." He has even tried subsequently to shoulder the role of purging Kakuei Tanaka and Noboru Takeshita, who were tenderly nurtured with enthusiasm and ushered into the seat of power. The political world sees him as a fellow who holds "the power of life and death" there and embraces a sense of fear.

Colorful "Skill" of Bewilderment

Japanese politicians generally are difficult to understand. There are many multifaceted, complicated people who have several faces. It can be said that Kanemaru also is of the difficult-to-understand type. It has always been that politicians never say frankly what their gut-feeling is, but there are variously people who can be more or less read from the correlation of their "speeches" and people who are ever-changing and difficult to comprehend.

If one is easily read, he is apt to be considered a light-weight politician and if he is too difficult to understand, he loses trust. Kanemaru is neither of those. It has been said that Takeshita's speeches were "articulate and unclear in meaning," but Kanemaru's speeches are comparatively "articulate and clear in meaning." The difficulty in understanding Kanemaru probably is the constantly hanging feeling that something else is hidden behind what he is saying. There is the case that he is playing some trick, the case that he is raising a trial balloon to see the opposition, the case that he purposely pretends as if he doesn't know and these "cases" are endless. There is always a fog surrounding Kanemaru.

"They say that I tell tall tales or they have played into Kanemaru's trap, but I don't have the head to be able to do such calculations. I am not a calculator. It is because I speak with my own impressions and sense of the time, an ability which forms Shin Kanemaru's uninhibited character." Kanemaru said in a recent interview. That "ability" has agitated the political world for a long time. Regardless of whether thoroughly calculated or not, impressions are an instantaneous calculation.

For the past 10 years, Kanemaru has secured the position of pacemaker in the political world. His methods are colorful, but he often agitates the political world by giving unexpected speeches at every point and artfully sets the pace. This unique "skill" of bewilderment seen in setting secret talks or fleeing to a foreign country when so inclined is the third point of Kanemaru-ism.

In the summer of 1988, Kanemaru put out a book entitled, "The Art of Standing Up, The Art of Lying Down." The origin of the title is recorded thus in the "Preface":

"It is related to when I did judo in my student days and there were some who criticized me as an expert at lying down or as a schemer. My judo, however, was Kodokan Judo and I was an expert in the skill of standing. The skill of lying down was not my strong point. In other words, it means my way of living is strictly the art of standing, but it probably seems to everyone that I am the skilled-at-lying-down type, so I made it 'The Art of Standing Up, The Art of Lying Down'."

Ultimately, he probably is an expert in both arts. Something akin to the art of lying down is the "Diet policy politics" that was developed by the Tanaka, Kanemaru, Takeshita connection and solidified his base. This is the dark part of Kanemaru's style.

He served four times as chair of the Diet Policy Committee and also as chair of the House Management Committee. Kanemaru himself often speaks with pride

of the warm connections created with leaders of the minority parties at that time. However, they were not so clean.

He says that he "drank, ate, traveled, and engaged in discussions with people of the minority parties," but a large sum of Diet Policy expenditures also flowed. At the same time, an "emotional world" was created with the minority parties and that probably became the lubricant for management of the House, but it left the evil of staining politics with the color of financial influence. The LDP which dispenses the money naturally takes on the atmosphere of bribe giver and the minority parties who take it assume the servile mood of bribe taker. A healthy Diet cannot be born from that. Kanemaru probably magnanimously says it is because money settles it, but the routinization of giving and receiving money in the political world has caused the loss of a sense of resistance to it such as in the Lockheed scandal and Recruit scandal.

Coming under the category of the art of standing up is Kanemaru's unexpected farsighted cleverness in posing issues. Two major submissions are the change of generations theory and the political reorganization theory.

Kanemaru first raised the change of generations theory in a speech in his home town of Kofu in May 1980, the day that the first same day House of Councillors and House of Representatives elections started.

"It is necessary to plan for a decisive change of generations in order to make politics a matter of the people. All the current heads of factions must resign and the factions be dissolved. There are about 50 of my colleagues who side with me, including the anti-mainstream. I plan to move to action with these people after the election."

He also gave a speech saying, "There is no other way but to proceed with a change of generations to reform and regenerate the LDP. It is not an age to be led by 70 and 80 year-old faction bosses. I also plan to become a sacrifice in the change of generations."

It is stimulating. In the general election in October the year before, the LDP suffered defeat and a struggle (the so-called 40-day struggle) arose between Prime Minister Ohira and Fukuda who was demanding that Ohira take responsibility and resign. That led to an unusual political situation in which a vote of no-confidence in the Ohira Cabinet that was submitted by the Japan Socialist Party was approved. After Kanemaru's speech, Ohira soon collapsed and died on 12 June, but the chaos within the LDP before that had become impossible.

Kanemaru felt that nothing but the rejuvenation of leaders would end the struggle in which only deep-seated grudges had been bared. He conferred with Takeshita and also had talks with Abe. In any event, a change of generations sounds good but since the bosses of the factions were to resign, it was a question of the general resignation of influential leaders. It included Tanaka and Fukuda, of course, as well as Ohira, Miki, and Nakasone. To Tanaka, it naturally appeared as revolt and there was an uproar from the Tanaka faction to the LDP and even the political world. Kanemaru had taken this into consideration and was prepared.

Takeshita said, "I will go with them." The party was astounded at this explosive speech, but more surprising was the sudden death of Ohira. The air of the election war changed completely and the results of the same day election were that the LDP had an overwhelming victory and the the change of generations theory faded. However, Zenko Suzuki, who followed after Ohira, told Kanemaru that "I will quit after one term. My work is to hand over politics to the younger generation."

As promised, he appointed new leaders to the party and cabinet and resigned after one 2-year term. His poor administration surrounding U.S. policy was a disaster, but Suzuki did not cling to political power.

The influential leaders at the time, except for Nakasone, all left the political arena on the occasion of the general election. This was Tanaka, Fukuda, and Suzuki. Miki died on 14 January 1988 over 8 years after Ohira. Nakasone also now has left the party and has no power. It took another 10 years from Kanemaru's proposal to the general resignation.

However, there is the impression that the state of progression with the change of generations, and most probably the "theory" itself, is a powerful weapon developed by political pacemaker Kanemaru. By raising the theory of change of generations, Kanemaru has secured an attractive position in the new leaders' group and succeeded in adding depth to Kanemaru's future political power. Times are changing and now that it has become the Takeshita, Abe, Miyazawa, and Watanabe era, Kanemaru has not tried to let go of the convenient prop of the change of generations theory.

When Takeshita, who chose young Ozawa as secretary general regardless of his opposition to Takeshita and left the Takeshita faction once he had been appointed prime minister, recently showed a desire to return to the faction, Chairman Kanemaru brandished the theory of change of generations and indicated that he is prepared not to let the job of chairman return to Takeshita, saying "The faction should rapidly yield to the young. For oldsters like me who hang on is strange in itself. Hashimoto (finance minister) would be all right, and Ozawa also is fine. Either Obuchi (former chief cabinet secretary) or Hata (former minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries) would be all right too."

If the struggle for successor to Prime Minister Kaifu becomes full-scale, Kanemaru probably will take the lead in advocating the theory of change of generations. The odds of a turn for Abe and Miyazawa are slim. Even if an "Abe regime" should be created, for Kanemaru it is meaningful to repeat the theory of change of generations. The result will be to solidify his position to exist as boss of the neo-new leaders.

When you think about it, the change of generations is only common sense in any age. Even if left alone, generations will be replaced as time passes. However, Kanemaru's principle probably is to take the initiative and express it in words when anyone else still would have difficulty saying it and to accomplish the trick of joining hands with "the next generation."

The reason it is a trick is that it will be ineffective if it is thought to be calculated. It is indispensable that people in general be convinced that "it is right" and admire Kanemaru's courage and foresight. Kanemaru has the political sense not to miss the timing. Moreover, he appears not just to be calculating, but to harbor a passion inside. That probably may be true. He is an ingenious director.

Symbol of Japan's Antiquity

The methods of Kanemaru, who is one step ahead, are unrivaled at present in the political arena. If the theory of a change of generations is a tool to bring "people" around to his pace, the theory of political reorganization is a means to involve the "system."

For the past 10 years, Kanemaru has freely used both theories. The theory of political reorganization, however, has not been raised as loudly as the change of generations. Kanemaru says that "I've been saying it all along for the past four or five years," but five years ago the secretary general of the LDP did not have the standpoint of advocating it publicly. However, talk of reorganization was broached from time to time among his former Diet Policy Committee colleagues of the minority party camps such as former JSP general secretary Makoto Tanabe, former Komeito secretary general Naohiko Okubo, and DSP chairman Eiichi Nagasue.

It seems the mood has been created that "when a good opportunity comes...." There is a Kanemaru-ish scrupulous preparation about that.

He continues to appeal for understanding that "The LDP has continued to be in political power for over 30 years since the conservative merger and gathered dust and dirt. Not just the LDP, but the opposition parties also are bad. We must do something drastic in this area in order to restore the trust of the people. It is proper that there be political reorganization for the next generation."

The first time he uttered this to the outside was in a speech in March last year when the Takeshita regime which Kanemaru had devoted his heart and soul to accomplish had come under criticism for the Recruit scandal and the consumption tax and slipped into a perilous situation.

A course has been followed in which further momentum was given to Kanemaru's theory of political reorganization after the LDP suffered a crushing defeat in the House of Councillors election in summer last year, and it waned after the big victory in the general election, but the fundamental points of "what to do" and "who will do it" are by no means clear. In big tasks such as political reorganization, however, probably everything is not clear-cut until just before.

What Kanemaru has said about political reorganization already has risen in quantity and is characterized by subtle changes every time he speaks. If put in proper order, the details of Kanemaru's reorganization, premised on division of the LDP conceives of a three-way division of the political arena with 1) the old LDP force; 2) a new conservative and middle of the road force (part of the LDP, Komeito, DSP, and JSP right); and 3) a left-wing force (Communist and JSP left) and nurtures a two major party system capable of alternating regimes between 1) and 2). Similar reorganization concepts not dependent on Kanemaru's proposal, however, have been discussed more than once before and there is nothing at all novel about it.

The reason that it seems to have reached a new stage now is that creation of a new political system is sought for the Diet to function effectively because the so-called twist phenomena has occurred where majority and minority party power in both the House of Councillors and House of Representatives are reversed. Another is because expectations have gathered on the brute force of Kanemaru who is the chief advocate.

On this point, Kanemaru is vague, grumbling "If necessary, I will turn the stage. However, this is not an age for us oldsters to do it. I believe that the lively young people should do it," and saying "In olden days there were great politicians. Bukichi Miki and Taketora Ogata resolutely carried out the political reorganization of the conservative merger at the risk of their lives. It would be good fortune if Shin Kanemaru were such a great man, but that is not so."

However, it is certain that Kanemaru is spreading the mood everywhere that he is trying to start the "big feat of the game" and the opportunity for reorganization has gradually grown stronger in the political world. It is naturally assumed that reform of the political system will not proceed so easily and that it will end up a dud, but a phenomenon is occurring where there is a kind of churning of the political world with Kanemaru's reorganization theory as the axis. There is an impression that he is a dauntless agitator and it is believed that is the fourth point of Kanemaru-ism.

Shin Kanemaru is at the advanced age of 75 and a half years old. He is not in good health, but at times he behaves ambitiously, at times he pretends to be disinterested and recently, he even has appeared spooky. "For the nation, for the people...." often appears in Kanemaru's speeches. When you hear these words, you cannot help being confused if he seems suspicious and also has the image of an old patriot. To accurately analyze Kanemaru, his words and deeds must be pursued for a while longer. If by chance they can be pursued, I believe they will end up more elusive.

To speak of the merits or demerits of Japanese politics having influential leaders inclined to be difficult to understand, the merit of trying to rescue politics from stagnation can be appreciated. At the same time, however, as a personification of the very inward-directed political climate and the Nagata-cho [location of Diet] emotional society, Kanemaru is a symbol of antiquity. For Japanese politics to provide for a truly outward-looking modernity in the 1990's, it must strive to break-away from Kanemaru-ism.

* Kanemaru Comments on Future of LDP

902.40134.A Tokyo BUNGEI SHUNJU in Japanese Apr 90 pp 94-103—FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Text] A momentous proposal by Shin Kanemaru, member of the House of Representatives and former deputy prime minister, that the LDP [Liberal Democratic Party] should split and that he would not oppose the breakup if it would help form the two-party system desired by the people.

It is absurd to say that the LDP achieved a victory in the recent election though they did, in fact, win more Diet seats than they had imagined. If LDP officials believe that "they have succeeded in obtaining the people's consent on the consumption tax issue," they are greatly mistaken.

Everyone is aware of the results of the defeat in the Upper House election. Since the Upper House cannot be dissolved, even if we wanted to restore the old order, we cannot do it in 3 or 6 years. It is a task which might or might not be accomplished even if 9 or 12 years are spent.

Therefore, by gaining a majority in the last election, we are now fifty-fifty or evenly matched. Well, we did not lose but it is senseless to argue over who won or who lost, like a tug-of-war contest. Such arguments will not benefit the people. I believe that this is a reflection of the people's feelings that they want the government and opposition parties to talk things over thoroughly in the Diet. Even if one side wants to use steamroller tactics, that would be impossible so the only alternative is to set the stage for negotiations.

I believe that our introspective thoughts on the election should be to accept the results with humility and to respond to them after carefully considering what the people are thinking and what we should do as politicians. That seems to be the most sincere and sensible interpretation.

The focus of the last election was not the scandal nor the Recruit issue, the consumption tax was actually the point of conflict. I do not know how the talks will proceed from here on regarding this problem but all Diet members of both the Upper and Lower Houses should be sincere and cope with it with serious consideration for the future of tomorrow's Japan instead of horse-trading as in the past, and that should be the true course of today's politics.

Meanwhile, there is the surging rise of the JSP [Japan Socialist Party]. Not only the LDP but all the other opposition parties, too, including the JCP [Japan Communist Party], the Democratic Socialist Party [DSP] and the Komeito, lost a considerable number of Diet seats. The lost seats went to the JSP.

Looking at the results, I feel that, perhaps, the people desire a two-party system. Well, as far as numbers are concerned, they are still only half as many as the LDP but the fact that the JSP increased their seats by this number indicates that there is a feeling among the people that they want a two-party system. Such a future configuration might have been mapped out in the blueprint of the last election.

The question is can the JSP adopt realistic policies in the future so that it can become the other party in a two-party system but I think that whether the JSP can become that or whether the LDP can play its role in the system depends on public opinion.

I believe that if the Diet continues to operate in a wishy-washy manner for the sake of mutual bargaining as in the past, the people will be turned off. I am hoping that the people will feel that the use of certain tactics, such as mutually thwarting each other or using wiles on each other, should no longer be tolerated.

Of course, in the next Diet session, negotiations will begin on how to handle the consumption tax. The opposition parties will advocate abolition and the LDP will suggest reassessment. Both sides have their honor to consider so they cannot simply withdraw but regardless, they should not enter into secret bargaining. The people will no longer condone bargaining by the leaders of the LDP and opposition parties in a closed room. It is not a contest of words and who will suffer from the tug-of-war? Won't that be the people?

Serious talks should be carried out openly so that the people can understand and the people's judgment should be awaited. I think that the next Diet must operate in that manner.

Well, the coming Diet must act speedily on the supplemental budget bill. The opposition parties should be fully aware of this, too. Though they understand, they will probably reject the bill, saying that since the consumption tax is included in the supplemental budget, they will be approving the tax if they accept the bill. Actually, this is not the time for such talk.

Or the opposition parties might charge that large allowances for election purposes are included in the supplemental budget. Well, I cannot say for certain that they are not included. However, I think that it is important to discuss such problems openly. Only voicing arguments, the opposition parties do not even want to participate in the supplemental budget deliberations but that is not a

healthy situation is it? It is my earnest hope that important issues will be discussed seriously in the Diet and I think that is the way it should be, in fact, the way it must be.

In any event, as I have been saying all along, the LDP did not win in the last election. The LDP only set the stage for discussions between the government and the opposition parties. That is so because bills passed in this house can be defeated in the Upper House. Bills approved in the Upper House can be rejected in the Lower House. Nothing can be done by bullying. Politics cannot be conducted in this manner.

"Partial Coalition" Is Out of the Question

Therefore, I had been saying even during the election that "there was nothing wrong with creating a coalition government." However, no one seems to understand, possibly because of the elation over the "victory." Abe and Miyazawa only looked puzzled.

There were some who advocated a "partial coalition" but that will not work. Partial coalition is a plan that some had to unite with certain designated parties which I hesitate to name. From the beginning, I believed that the plan to carry on with a partial coalition was somewhat biased. Now is not the time to use wily techniques.

Japan is now faced with the first "national crisis" since the arrival of the "black ships." The consumption tax is not the big problem. Both externally and internally, many difficult problems have accumulated. Look at U.S.-Japanese relations and examine the world political situation. There are the problems of the Structural Impediments Initiative talks and the Super 301 clause as well as the issue of theU.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Various other difficult problems are being forced upon us, one after another.

Faced with this situation, now is not the time to be fighting only over the consumption tax. Rather, we should be establishing the condition whereby we can mutually help each other. From that standpoint, I think we should entertain the idea of creating a coalition cabinet for the benefit of future generations. I am advocating that "coalition be tried" because I think that it will be for the good of the nation and the people in the future.

Before the election, I said, "If the LDP loses, it should relinquish the government reins. The opposition parties should be entrusted." I also said, "If we do win, we cannot carry on politics unless we are prepared for a coalition." Unless both the ruling and the opposition parties are that broad-minded, today's problems cannot be resolved.

Problems over U.S.-Japan trade frictions are still being debated heatedly and U.S.-Japanese relations are strained. As far as Japan is concerned, I believe that Japan exists because of the United States while the United States is not dependent solely on Japan. Future Japanese development is not possible without the United States. Based on that viewpoint, I have been saying that the proper course for today's Japanese politicians is to consider how to resolve these various problems with wisdom and intelligence.

Of course, only a rash person like myself would say such things and a gentlemanly politician would not make such statements. I have never thought of becoming the prime minister, or the speaker of the house or a cabinet minister. Even when urged to become one, I have refused. I am not a person of such stature as to assume those positions. I am well aware of that. As the saying goes, "Leave wild flowers alone in the field where they belong." I prefer to be out in the field. Well, I'm like Koroku Hachisuka [a historic personage of unrefined character] (laughter).

There are some who say, "Kanemaru is talking big again," or "Do not be deceived by Kanemaru's ruse," but I, Shin Kanemaru, do not have such a calculating mind. I am not a precision machine like a computer. Well, I say things that others hesitate to say but such statements cannot be made if guided by self-interest. I am not making calculated statements based on "mathematical computations." I am saying those things out of my intuition and feelings at the moment. This is the art of Shin Kanemaru's "fast-and-loose" personality (laughter).

Other people might think what a stupid thing he is saying but as for myself, I believe that what I am saying is upright. The person who does not understand what I am saying is, perhaps, the blockhead.

I have been saying for the past 4 or 5 years that "the political world must be reorganized." Forty years have passed since the union of the conservative parties. Filth has set in, dust has gathered and various scandals have arisen. Viewing such a situation, I can feel vividly with my own skin that the people are fed up with the state of the present politics. Unless we do something about it, dire consequences will follow.

Never Steamrolled a Bill

I have discussed the matter on many occasions with my party colleagues and opposition party members. I learned that no one is satisfied with the present political situation. Everyone agrees that "that is true." However, when it comes to taking action and details are considered on what methods and what forms are desired most by the people, the problem becomes increasingly difficult.

Of course, a problem of this nature cannot be resolved speedily. It will require "accumulation." As I see it, various experiences must be piled up and the results of the last election should be regarded as one of the steps in the accumulation process. Thus, though it is slow and it does not seem to be progressing, political reorganization is, in reality, proceeding gradually. I believe that the nation and the people will benefit if the process can be completed as rapidly as possible.

I have many friends with common interests in the opposition parties. Come to think of it, within the LDP, I might have the biggest pipeline to opposition parties. When Shigeru Hori was the House Speaker, I served as chairman of the Standing Committee on House Management. I accepted the position because Hori told me, "I want you to serve as my assistant." Since then, I served on four occasions as the Diet Management Committee chairman. There is no one else in the LDP who served four times as the party's Diet Policy Committee chairman.

While serving as the Diet Management Committee chairman, I never steamrolled a bill, not even once. It is my pet theory that politics means "cooperation." From that standpoint, using steamroller tactics is not politics.

For that reason, a while ago, Shintaro Abe asked me to become chairman of the special committee on consumption tax. I thought then that, "It was not for me to serve now as the special committee chairman on consumption tax," but he persistently asked me, saying "there is no other person who can handle this task," so I accepted reluctantly.

However, the discussions turned out as they did, as you know, and during the process matters came up with which I could not agree. That was one of the reasons why, when the bill was railroaded through the House in November of the year before last, I turned over the chairmanship to Kaifu and withdrew.

My Thoughts Are Shared by JSP

"Value human relationships," "Lend a helping hand to those in trouble," "Politicians must be just"—these are the three political philosophies of Shin Kanemaru, the politician, who won elections consecutively for over 30 years. Therefore, when opposition party members were troubled, I have said, "I will help you." In return, when I was having difficulties, they helped me.

Even today, I dine frequently with opposition party members and we talk about political reorganizations on those occaions. They do not give definite answers but they do say, "That is an idea, we should study it."

In talking about various things, I find that they are all human beings and not so different from us. Well, every human being is born from the mother's womb (laughter).

However, the present members of the LDP think that the JSP is made up of socialists who do not have anything in common with us. Putting aside the JCP, I think that members of JSP, Komeito and DSP all have something in common. I always wonder why it would be wrong to join hands with such persons.

Experiences which I had when I was young influenced me to think along those lines. I was supposed to work in Manchuria after graduating from college. But I was the eldest son and our family was in the sake brewing business. At the time, my father was helping a bus company with which he had connections and neglected the family business. He probably wanted his son to take over the sake brewery. He got angry because I said "I'm going to Manchuria" and said he will disown me. I did not think it was worth going to Manchuria if it meant disinheritance so I entered the family business.

Taking over the family business, I learned that since we had a sake brewery, we had considerable land and we were collecting rental fees from tenants by lending it. In those days, tenant fees were paid with bags of unhulled rice. To check on whether there was any cheating of unhulled rice, bags were pierced for inspection. There were some cheaters who put stones in the bags. However, I really hated to do it. Piercing a bag means doubting a person, doesn't it? I wondered why it was necessary to go that far. We had about 171.5 acres of land but I told my father, "I do not want this land, even if you gave it to me, so let's sell it."

My father replied, "We might as well if you're going to say that," so leaving only the property around the house, we apportioned the remainder to the tenants. Since this happened before World War II, it preceded the agrarian reform by many years.

Because of such experiences, I have something in common ideologically with JSP members. That is why we have topics of common interest. Some of the LDP members claim that, "Kanemaru has lost some of his mental powers," but that is probably why Shin Kanemaru has the temperament to deal with the JSP.

In any event, Japanese politics cannot continue to function under the present system. Taking the real estate problem as an example, if land costs Y100 million or Y150 million per tsubo [3.954 square yards], no one can build a house. To solve that, it is necessary, first of all, to eliminate the concentration in Tokyo. I am suggesting that the Diet bemoved elsewhere at this time. Unless we do that, the problems of convergence on Tokyo and soaring land prices will not be solved. Who will accept the responsibility if disaster strikes Tokyo?

This problem must be handled with considerably forced political power but if a salaried worker cannot buy land or build a house, what good is politics?

Regarding the rice problem, too, is it alright to say, "we will not let in even a grain," while we are exporting overseas every other item, like automobiles and precision machinery? On the one hand, there are producers but on the other, there are consumers. I think that in handling the problem, the standpoint of consumers must also beconsidered. Of course, I think it would be "better" if rice were not imported but you must also consider whether that would jeopardize U.S.-Japanese relations. Discussions should be held on what would be good for Japan, as a whole, but partly because of the election, no one dare to speak his mind.

After receiving complaints about this and that from the United States, responses are prepared hurriedly. Perhaps, there is a calculation that by blaming the action on U.S. demand, internal resistance will soften and it would be easier to carry it out. Anyway, aren't the Japanese being crafty? Or, is it the Americans who are shrewd? In any case, politics cannot function as it is.

Who Will Carry Out the Reorganization?

Regarding the political reorganization, I have been thinking of discussing it personally with influential LDP leaders whenever the occasion arose. However, such opportunities are rare. I am talking about it to one or two people, at a time, but unfortunately, I do not have the chance to discuss it as a group.

Furthermore, there are various factions within the LDP and perhaps principles and positions differ slightly according to the faction. I feel that there are factional differences because politicians of the Keiseikai, to which I belong, and members of Miyazawa's Kochikai, seem to be talking at cross-purposes when they meet. The situation is not that simple.

In the LDP, there are rightist and leftist thoughts and there are some whom you doubt can be LDP members. That is the LDP.

That is a positive factor but in the future political configuration, one should also consider whether rightists and leftists can get together to conduct politics.

When the time comes for political reorganization, I think that it must be carried out with considerable boldness. JSP, Komeito and DSP members should be included in the LDP and LDP members should join them. Two major political parties cannot be established if, instead of thinking along those lines, you only consider absorbing others in the LDP. There should be various ways of doing it but one is to build a new party by combining a JSP segment, the Komeito and the DSP, and releasing, or should I say, having them accept a section of the LDP. Those remaining in the LDP will form the other party. By so doing, won't we be able to build a balanced two-party system for the first time? I think that is possible and I believe that the people want that. We must do it.

Therefore, I think that it is alright for the LDP to split. In fact, it should split. That is my opinion.

Well, the question is who can accomplish that and along that line, there were great politicians in the past. There were leaders like Bukichi Miki and Taketora Ogata, who, at the risk of their lives, carried out the political reorganization known as the merger of conservative parties. Of course, if I can be such a great leader, I would consider it a good fortune but that will not happen because my constitutional makeup is different.

However, as Shin Kanemaru, a politician, I have the privilege of serving in the Diet through the votes of the local people. Therefore, my first task is to meet the expectations of my colleagues. In that sense, I will do whatever is needed for Yamanashi Prefecture. Thus, I seem to have a reputation in the local constituency of doing a good job, if I may so (laughter).

As a politician, however, I have to think of the future of Japan, in general. As part of that foresight, it is important to consider the position in which Japan is placed today and how to make that compatible with the political situation, economic conditions and ideological factors existing in the world. For that reason, it is not proper for those serving as Diet members to be looking for grafts only. Such actions give rise to the Recruit incident and other problems for which we are being criticized. There are politicians who become grafters. Isn't that one of the reasons why trust in politics fall?

There are people in society who brand me indiscriminately as "crafty," "scheming," or "a sly old man." Hiroshi Kume of the news media has been making very critical remarks about me. A while ago, I complained to Kume. I told him, "You call me a sly old man but tell me what is cunning about me? I am not that type of a person."

I also receive a considerable number of letters at my home. Some charge that I am a "behind-the-scenes manipulator" or say that "old persons should withdraw from the scene." But there also letters saying: "The consumption tax is absolutely necessary. Yet, you are saying that you will compromise. You should retire as soon as possible"; or "You are trying to frustrate Kaifu because you want to make Abe the prime minister." In spite of the fact that I am trying so hard, they write whatever they please and I get angry reading them.

Reason for Run-in with Takeshita

If I can be criticized for anything, that might be for talking too much but being talkative does not mean that I am giving talks here and there because I like it. When I make a speech, 10 or 15 reporters assigned to Kanemaru gather and they write up every word I utter in an entertaining and amusing style because there is freedom of speech. I tell them to "sharpen your pencils and write reliably" but that only invites misunderstandings.

For example, since Takeshita said he was going to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Brazilian president, I suggested, "Why don't you stop over in the United States on your way back and have a good talk with the President. Abe, who served as foreign minister,should go, too." Soon thereafter, news articles appeared stating, "he is giving Abe a boost and thwarting Kaifu." I am no longer sure what I should say.

Nuisance phone calls keep coming all night. When the phone is picked up, the call is cut off. There are threatening calls like, "You are a fool; I am going to kill you with a pistol." My wife answers the phone but in the end, she is yanking out the phone cord.

This is terrible. Whatever the rewards, anyone who continues at this game is a fool. I want to quit at the earliest possible date (laughter).

There are people who make various comments about my relations with Takeshita but there is nothing serious enough to worry about. We get along fine.

My relations with Takeshita soured because of the following incident. When his resignation was decided and the next prime minister was to be chosen, Takeshita stated, "Masayoshi Ito will be recommended as prime minister," but no decision was made for a week. I said, "This is terrible. Politics must function every day. There is no way to suspend it. It is ridiculous to take 1 or 2 weeks to decide on the next prime minister." Then, he replied, "if the prime minister is to be selected from the cabinet, it would be this or that person. Intuitively, I cautioned him, "You are probably thinking of selecting this person. That is a bad choice." However, on the very next day, that person was selected.

I said, "what?" and at the next general meeting of the Keiseikai, I said this in front of a large group of reporters:

"I am the president of the Keiseikai but only a 'hired manager.' What would you think if the prime minister created a problem by doing what he pleased and then, expected his 'hired manager' to take care of the problem?"

The reporters were delighted to hear this.

At the time, I really felt that way. However, after that, I told Takeshita," I will not do anything to jeopardize our personal relationships. But concerning politics, I will say what needs to be said." Now, we are seeing each other and drinking together. In fact, I just had a drink with him last night.

The mass media say that two influential LDP leaders are at odds but that is no longer true. Truthfully speaking, neither is a great leader. If Takeshita had been more upright, this political situation would not have arisen (laughter).

With regard to Kaifu, too, there were people who made critical comments without knowing my true feelings. When Uno resigned, we discussed the choice of a successor. At the time, I was also consulted and based on the decision that there was no other person, I asked Kaifu. I am one of those who supported Kaifu. I would not try to thwart him.

Recently, when I met Kaifu, I told him the following:

"A samurai never goes back on his word. Since you won the election, you should naturally continue in office. Conduct sound politics that people can trust. While you have the people's trust, I will support you wholeheartedly. However, if you commit a blunder, I cannot help you. You will have to accept the responsibility. I will never do anything to decive you. I am not a double-dealer."

As far as personnel assignments are concerned, since the Nakasone faction decreased in number, a member of the Miyazawa faction might be chosen as one of the top three party executives, if selection is to be based on factions as heretofore. I am of that opinion. Kaifu, too, was saying, "That's right."

Anyway, at this time, we should be thinking of uniting in action but people have their own ambitions. Some want to become a cabinet minister, or the deputy party president or the speaker of the house.... As far as that is concerned, I am saying I do not want any position so I am the most straightforward (laughter).

Since I am a person with limited capabilities, I will be in trouble if too much expectation is placed on me but as for political reorganization, however unworthy, I, Shin Kanemaru, will do whatever I can.